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VISITORS
TO
THE ALHAMBRA.

VOL. II.

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VISITORS
TO
THE ALHAMBRA.

It is now nearly three months since I took up my abode in the Alhambra, during which time the progress of the season has wrought many changes. When I first arrived every thing was in the freshness of May; the foliage of the trees was still tender and transparent; the pomegranate had not yet shed its brilliant crimson blossoms; the orchards of the Xenil and the Darro were in full bloom; the rocks were hung with wild flowers, and Granada seemed completely sur-

rounded by a wilderness of roses, among which, innumerable nightingales sang, not merely in the night, but all day long.

The advance of summer has withered the rose and silenced the nightingale, and the distant country begins to look parched and sunburnt ; though a perennial verdure reigns immediately round the city, and in the deep narrow valleys at the foot of the snow-capped mountains.

The Alhambra possesses retreats graduated to the heat of the weather, among which the most peculiar is the almost subterranean apartment of the baths. This still retains its ancient Oriental character, though stamped with the touching traces of decline. At the entrance, opening into a small court formerly adorned with flowers, is a hall, moderate in size, but light and graceful in architecture. It is overlooked by a small gallery supported by marble pillars and moresco arches. An alabaster fountain in the centre of the pavement

still throws up a jet of water to cool the place. On each side are deep alcoves with raised platforms, where the bathers, after their ablutions, reclined on luxurious cushions, soothed to voluptuous repose by the fragrance of the perfumed air and the notes of soft music from the gallery. Beyond this hall are the interior chambers, still more private and retired, where no light is admitted but through small apertures in the vaulted ceilings. Here was the sanctum sanctorum of female privacy, where the beauties of the Harem indulged in the luxury of the baths. A soft mysterious light reigns through the place, the broken baths are still there, and traces of ancient elegance. The prevailing silence and obscurity have made this a favourite resort of bats who nestle during the day in the dark nooks and corners, and on being disturbed, flit mysteriously about the twilight chambers, heightening, in an indescribable degree, their air of desertion and decay.

In this cool and elegant, though dilapidated retreat, which has the freshness and seclusion of a grotto, I have of late passed the sultry hours of the day, emerging towards sunset ; and bathing, or rather swimming, at night in the great reservoir of the main court. In this way I have been enabled in a measure to counteract the relaxing and enervating influence of the climate.

My dream of absolute sovereignty however is at an end. I was roused from it lately by the report of fire arms ; which reverberated among the towers as if the castle had been taken by surprise. On sallying forth, I found an old cavalier with a number of domestics, in possession of the Hall of Ambassadors. He was an ancient Count who had come up from his palace in Granada to pass a short time in the Alhambra for the benefit of purer air ; and who, being a veteran and inveterate sportsman, was endeavouring to get an appetite for his breakfast by shooting at swallows from the balconies. It was a harmless

amusement, for though, by the alertness of his attendants in loading his pieces, he was enabled to keep up a brisk fire, I could not accuse him of the death of a single swallow. Nay, the birds themselves seemed to enjoy the sport, and to deride his want of skill, skimming in circles close to the balconies and twittering as they darted by.

The arrival of this old gentleman has in some manner changed the aspect of affairs, but has likewise afforded matter for agreeable speculation. We have tacitly shared the empire between us, like the last kings of Granada, excepting that we maintain a most amicable alliance. He reigns absolute over the court of the Lions and its adjacent halls, while I maintain peaceful possession of the regions of the baths and the little garden of Lindaraja. We take our meals together under the arcades of the court, where the fountains cool the air, and bubbling rills run along the channels of the marble pavement.

In the evening a domestic circle gathers about

the worthy old cavalier. The countess comes up from the city, with a favourite daughter about sixteen years of age. Then there are the official dependants of the Count, his chaplain, lawyer, his secretary, his steward, and other officers and agents of his extensive possessions. Thus he holds a kind of domestic court, where every person seeks to contribute to his amusement without sacrificing his own pleasure or self respect. In fact, whatever may be said of Spanish pride, it certainly does not enter into social or domestic life. Among no people are the relations between kindred more cordial, or between superior and dependant more frank and genial ; in these respects there still remains, in the provincial life of Spain, much of the vaunted simplicity of the olden times.

The most interesting member of this family group, however, is the daughter of the Count, the charming though almost infantine little Carmen. Her form has not yet attained its

maturity, but has already the exquisite symmetry and pliant grace so prevalent in this country. Her blue eyes, fair complexion, and light hair, are unusual in Andalusia, and give a mildness and gentleness to her demeanour in contrast to the usual fire of Spanish beauty, but in perfect unison with the guileless and confiding innocence of her manners. She has, however, all the innate aptness and versatility of her fascinating countrywomen, and sings, dances, and plays the guitar, and other instruments, to admiration.

A few days after taking up his residence in the Alhambra, the Count gave a domestic fete on his saint's day, assembling round him the members of his family and household, while several old servants came from his distant possessions to pay their reverence to him, and partake of the good cheer. This patriarchal spirit which characterized the Spanish nobility in the days of their opulence, has declined with their fortunes ; but some who, like the Count, still retain their ancient fa-

mily possessions, keep up a little of the ancient system and have their estates overrun and almost eaten up by generations of idle retainers. According to this magnificent old Spanish system, in which the national pride and generosity bore equal parts, a superannuated servant was never turned off, but became a charge for the rest of his days ; nay, his children and his children's children, and often their relatives, to the right and left, became gradually entailed upon the family. Hence the huge palaces of the Spanish nobility, which have such an air of empty ostentation from the greatness of their size compared with the mediocrity and scantiness of their furniture, were absolutely required in the golden days of Spain, by the patriarchal habits of their possessors. They were little better than vast barracks for the hereditary generations of hangers on, that batten at the expense of a Spanish noble. The worthy old Count, who has estates in various parts of the kingdom, assures me that some of

them barely feed the hordes of dependants nestled upon them ; who consider themselves entitled to be maintained upon the place rent-free, because their forefathers have been so for generations.

The domestic fete of the Count broke in upon the usual still life of the Alhambra ; music and laughter resounded through its late silent halls ; there were groups of the guests amusing themselves about the galleries and gardens, and officious servants from town hurrying through the courts, bearing viands to the ancient kitchen, which was again alive with the tread of cooks and scullions, and blazed with unwonted fires.

The feast, for a Spanish set dinner is literally a feast, was laid in the beautiful Moresco hall called “ La Sala de las dos Hermanas,” (the saloon of the two sisters,) the table groaned with abundance, and a joyous conviviality prevailed round the board ; for though the Spaniards are generally an abstemious people, they are complete revellers at a banquet. For my own part, there

was something peculiarly interesting in thus sitting at a feast in the royal halls of the Alhambra, given by the representative of one of its most renowned conquerors ; for the venerable Count, though unwarlike himself, is the lineal descendant and representative of the " Great Captain," the illustrious Gonsalvo of Cordova, whose sword he guards in the archives of his palace at Granada.

The banquet ended, the company adjourned to the Hall of Ambassadors. Here every one contributed to the general amusement by exerting some peculiar talent ; singing, improvising, telling wonderful tales, or dancing to that all-pervading talisman of Spanish pleasure, the guitar.

The life and charm of the whole assemblage, however, was the gifted little Carmen. She took her part in two or three scenes from Spanish comedies, exhibiting a charming dramatic talent ; she gave imitations of the popular Italian singers with singular and whimsical felicity, and a rare quality of voice ; she imitated the dialects, dances,

and ballads of the gypsies and the neighbouring peasantry, but did every thing with a facility, a neatness, a grace, and an all-pervading prettiness, that were perfectly fascinating.

The great charm of her performances, however, was their being free from all pretension, or ambition of display. She seemed unconscious of the extent of her own talents, and in fact is accustomed only to exert them casually, like a child, for the amusement of the domestic circle. Her observation and tact must be remarkably quick, for her life is passed in the bosom of her family, and she can only have had casual and transient glances at the various characters and traits, brought out *impromptu* in moments of domestic hilarity like the one in question. It is pleasing to see the fondness and admiration with which every one of the household regards her : she is never spoken of, even by the domestics, by any other appellation than that of La Niña, ‘the child,’ an appellation which thus applied has

something peculiarly kind and endearing in the Spanish language.

Never shall I think of the Alhambra without remembering the lovely little Carmen sporting in happy and innocent girlhood in its marble halls, dancing to the sound of the Moorish castañets, or mingling the silver warbling of her voice with the music of the fountains.

On this festive occasion several curious and amusing legends and traditions were told ; many of which have escaped my memory ; but out of those that most struck me, I will endeavour to shape forth some entertainment for the reader.

“*W. EL*”
“*Q. B.*”

LEGEND
OF
PRINCE AHMED AL KAMEL;
OR,
THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

LEGEND OF
PRINCE AHMED AL KAMEL;

OR,

THE PILGRIM OF LOVE.

THERE was once a Moorish king of Granada, who had but one son, whom he named Ahmed, to which his courtiers added the surname of al Kamel, or the perfect, from the indubitable signs of superexcellence which they perceived in him in his very infancy. The astrologers countenanced them in their foresight, predicting every thing in his favour that could make a perfect prince and a prosperous sovereign. One cloud only rested upon his destiny, and even

that was of a roseate hue. He would be of an amorous temperament, and run great perils from the tender passion. If, however, he could be kept from the allurements of love, until of mature age, these dangers would be averted, and his life thereafter be one uninterrupted course of felicity.

To prevent all danger of the kind, the king wisely determined to rear the prince in a seclusion where he should never see a female face, nor hear even the name of love. For this purpose he built a beautiful palace on the brow of the hill above the Alhambra, in the midst of delightful gardens, but surrounded by lofty walls, being, in fact, the same palace known at the present day by the name of the Generalife. In this palace the youthful prince was shut up, and entrusted to the guardianship and instruction of Eben Bonabben, one of the wisest and dryest of Arabian sages, who had passed the greatest part of his life in Egypt, studying hieroglyphics, and

making researches among the tombs and pyramids, and who saw more charms in an Egyptian mummy, than in the most tempting of living beauties. The sage was ordered to instruct the prince in all kinds of knowledge but one—he was to be kept utterly ignorant of love. “Use every precaution for the purpose you may think proper,” said the king, “but remember, O Eben Bonabben, if my son learns aught of that forbidden knowledge while under your care, your head shall answer for it.” A withered smile came over the dry visage of the wise Bonabben at the menace. “Let your majesty’s heart be as easy about your son, as mine is about my head: am I a man likely to give lessons in the idle passion?”

Under the vigilant care of the philosopher, the prince grew up, in the seclusion of the palace and its gardens. He had black slaves to attend upon him,—hideous mutes, who knew nothing of love, or if they did, had not words to commu-

nicate it. His mental endowments were the peculiar care of Eben Bonabben, who sought to initiate him into the abstruse lore of Egypt, but in this the prince made little progress, and it was soon evident that he had no turn for philosophy.

He was, however, amazingly ductile for a youthful prince, ready to follow any advice, and always guided by the last counsellor. He suppressed his yawns, and listened patiently to the long and learned discourses of Eben Bonabben, from which he imbibed a smattering of various kinds of knowledge, and thus happily attained his twentieth year, a miracle of princely wisdom—but totally ignorant of love.

About this time, however, a change came over the conduct of the prince. He completely abandoned his studies, and took to strolling about the gardens, and musing by the side of the fountains. He had been taught a little music among his various accomplishments; it now

engrossed a great part of his time, and a turn for poetry became apparent. The sage Eben Bonabben took the alarm, and endeavoured to work these idle humours out of him by a severe course of algebra—but the prince turned from it with distaste. “I cannot endure algebra,” said he; “it is an abomination to me. I want something that speaks more to the heart.”

The sage Eben Bonabben shook his dry head at the words. “Here is an end to philosophy,” thought he. “The prince has discovered he has a heart!” He now kept anxious watch upon his pupil, and saw that the latent tenderness of his nature was in activity, and only wanted an object. He wandered about the gardens of the Generalife in an intoxication of feelings of which he knew not the cause. Sometimes he would sit plunged in a delicious reverie; then he would seize his lute and draw from it the most touching notes, and then throw it aside, and break forth into sighs and ejaculations.

By degrees this loving disposition began to extend to inanimate objects; he had his favourite flowers, which he cherished with tender assiduity; then he became attached to various trees, and there was one in particular of a graceful form and drooping foliage, on which he lavished his amorous devotion, carving his name on its bark, hanging garlands on its branches, and singing couplets in its praise, to the accompaniment of his lute.

The sage Eben Bonabben was alarmed at this excited state of his pupil. He saw him on the very brink of forbidden knowledge—the least hint might reveal to him the fatal secret. Trembling for the safety of the prince and the security of his own head, he hastened to draw him from the seductions of the garden, and shut him up in the highest tower of the Generalife. It contained beautiful apartments, and commanded an almost boundless prospect, but was elevated far above that atmosphere of sweets and those

witching bowers so dangerous to the feelings of the too susceptible Ahmed.

What was to be done, however, to reconcile him to this restraint and to beguile the tedious hours? He had exhausted almost all kinds of agreeable knowledge; and algebra was not to be mentioned. Fortunately Eben Bonabben had been instructed, when in Egypt, in the language of birds, by a Jewish Rabbin, who had received it in lineal transmission from Solomon the wise, who had been taught it by the Queen of Sheba. At the very mention of such a study, the eyes of the prince sparkled with animation, and he applied himself to it with such avidity, that he soon became as great an adept as his master.

The tower of the Generalife was no longer a solitude; he had companions at hand with whom he could converse. The first acquaintance he formed was with a hawk, who built his nest in a crevice of the lofty battlements, from whence he soared far and wide in quest of prey. The

prince, however, found little to like or esteem in him. He was a mere pirate of the air, swaggering and boastful, whose talk was all about rapine and courage and desperate exploits.

His next acquaintance was an owl, a mighty wise looking bird, with a huge head and staring eyes, who sat blinking and goggling all day in a hole in the wall, but roamed forth at night. He had great pretensions to wisdom, talked something of astrology and the moon, and hinted at the dark sciences; but he was grievously given to metaphysics, and the prince found his prosings even more ponderous than those of the sage Eben Bonabben.

Then there was a bat, that hung all day by his heels in the dark corner of a vault, but sallied out in a slip-shod style at twilight. He, however, had but twilight ideas on all subjects, derided things of which he had taken but an imperfect view, and seemed to take delight in nothing.

Besides these there was a swallow, with whom the prince was at first much taken. He was a smart talker, but restless, bustling, and for ever on the wing ; seldom remaining long enough for any continued conversation. He turned out in the end to be a mere smatterer, who did but skim over the surface of things, pretending to know every thing, but knowing nothing thoroughly.

These were the only feathered associates with whom the prince had any opportunity of exercising his newly acquired language ; the tower was too high for any other birds to frequent it. He soon grew weary of his new acquaintances, whose conversation spoke so little to the head, and nothing to the heart ; and gradually relapsed into his loneliness. A winter passed away, spring opened with all its bloom and verdure and breathing sweetness, and the happy time arrived for birds to pair and build their nests. Suddenly, as it were, a universal burst of song and melody broke forth from the groves

and gardens of the Generalife, and reached the prince in the solitude of his tower. From every side he heard the same universal theme—love—love—love—chaunted forth and responded to in every variety of note and tone. The prince listened in silence and perplexity. “What can be this love,” thought he, “of which the world seems so full, and of which I know nothing?” He applied for information to his friend the hawk. The ruffian bird answered in a tone of scorn: “You must apply,” said he “to the vulgar peaceable birds of earth who are made for the prey of us princes of the air. My trade is war, and fighting my delight. In a word, I am a warrior, and know nothing of this thing called love.”

The prince turned from him with disgust, and sought the owl in his retreat. “This is a bird,” said he, “of peaceful habits, and may be able to solve my question.” So he asked the owl to tell him what was this love

about which all the birds in the groves below were singing.

Upon this, the owl put on a look of offended dignity. "My nights," said he, "are taken up in study and research, and my days in ruminating in my cell upon all that I have learnt. As to these singing birds of whom you talk, I never listen to them—I despise them and their themes. Allah be praised, I cannot sing; I am a philosopher, and know nothing of this thing called love."

The prince now repaired to the vault, where his friend the bat was hanging by the heels, and propounded the same question. The bat wrinkled up his nose into a most snappish expression. "Why do you disturb me in my morning's nap with such an idle question?" said he peevishly. "I only fly by twilight, when all birds are asleep, and never trouble myself with their concerns. I am neither bird nor beast, and I thank heaven for it. I have found out

the villany of the whole of them, and hate them one and all. In a word, I am a misanthrope—and know nothing of this thing called love.”

As a last resort, the prince now sought the swallow, and stopped him just as he was circling about the summit of the tower. The swallow, as usual, was in a prodigious hurry, and had scarce time to make a reply. “Upon my word,” said he, “I have so much public business to attend to, and so many pursuits to follow, that I have had no time to think on the subject. I have every day a thousand visits to pay; a thousand affairs of importance to examine into, that leave me not a moment of leisure for these little sing-song matters. In a word, I am a citizen of the world—I know nothing of this thing called love.” So saying, the swallow dived into the valley, and was out of sight in a moment.

The prince remained disappointed and perplexed, but with his curiosity still more piqued

by the difficulty of gratifying it. While in this mood, his ancient guardian entered the tower. The prince advanced eagerly to meet him. "O sage Eben Bonabben," cried he, "thou hast revealed to me much of the wisdom of the earth; but there is one thing of which I remain in utter ignorance, and would fain be informed."

"My prince has but to make the inquiry, and every thing within the limited range of his servant's intellect is at his command."

"Tell me then, O most profound of sages, what is the nature of this thing called love?"

The sage Eben Bonabben was struck as with a thunderbolt. He trembled and turned pale, and felt as if his head sat but loosely on his shoulders.

"What could suggest such a question to my prince—where could he have learnt so idle a word?"

The prince led him to the window of the tower. "Listen, O Eben Bonabben," said he,

The sage listened. The nightingale sat in a thicket below the tower, singing to his paramour the rose; from every blossomed spray and tufted grove arose a strain of melody; and love—love—love—was still the unvarying strain.

“Allah Akbar! God is great!” exclaimed the wise Bonabben. “Who shall pretend to keep this secret from the heart of man, when even the birds of the air conspire to betray it?”

Then turning to Ahmed—“O my prince,” cried he, “shut thine ears to these seductive strains. Close thy mind against this dangerous knowledge. Know that this love is the cause of half the ills of wretched mortality. It is this which produces bitterness and strife between brethren and friends; which causes treacherous murder and desolating war. Care and sorrow, weary days and sleepless nights, are its attendants. It withers the bloom and blights the joys of youth, and brings on the ills and griefs of premature old age. Allah preserve thee, my

prince, in total ignorance of this thing called love!"

The sage Eben Bonabben hastily retired, leaving the prince plunged in still deeper perplexity. It was in vain he attempted to dismiss the subject from his mind; it still continued uppermost in his thoughts, and teased and exhausted him with vain conjectures. Surely, said he to himself, as he listened to the tuneful strains of the birds, there is no sorrow in those notes; every thing seems tenderness and joy. If love be a cause of such wretchedness and strife, why are not these birds **drooping** in solitude, or **tearing** each other in pieces, instead of **fluttering** cheerfully about the groves, or sporting with each other among flowers?

He lay one morning on his couch meditating on this inexplicable matter. The window of his chamber was open to admit the soft morning breeze which came laden with the perfume of orange blossoms from the valley of the Darro.

The voice of the nightingale was faintly heard, still chanting the wonted theme. As the prince was listening and sighing, there was a sudden rushing noise in the air ; a beautiful dove, pursued by a hawk, darted in at the window, and fell panting on the floor ; while the pursuer, balked of his prey, soared off to the mountains.

The prince took up the gasping bird, smoothed its feathers, and nestled it in his bosom. When he had soothed it by his caresses, he put it in a golden cage, and offered it, with his own hands, the whitest and finest of wheat and the purest of water. The bird, however, refused food, and sat drooping and pining, and uttering piteous moans.

“What aileth thee?” said Ahmed. “Hast thou not every thing thy heart can wish?”

“Alas, no!” replied the dove ; “am I not separated from the partner of my heart, and that too in the happy spring-time, the very season of love !”

“Of love!” echoed Ahmed; “I pray thee, my pretty bird, canst thou then tell me what is love?”

“Too well can I, my prince. It is the torment of one, the felicity of two, the strife and enmity of three. It is a charm which draws two beings together, and unites them by delicious sympathies, making it happiness to be with each other, but misery to be apart. Is there no being to whom you are drawn by these ties of tender affection?”

“I like my old teacher Eben Bonabben better than any other being; but he is often tedious, and I occasionally feel myself happier without his society.”

“That is not the sympathy I mean. I speak of love, the great mystery and principle of life; the intoxicating revel of youth; the sober delight of age. Look forth, my prince, and behold how at this blest season all nature is full of love. Every created being has its mate; the most insignificant bird sings to its paramour;

the very beetle woos its lady-beetle in the dust, and yon butterflies which you see fluttering high above the tower and toying in the air, are happy in each other's loves. Alas, my prince! hast thou spent so many of the precious days of youth without knowing any thing of love? Is there no gentle being of another sex—no beautiful princess or lovely damsel who has ensnared your heart, and filled your bosom with a soft tumult of pleasing pains and tender wishes?"

"I begin to understand," said the prince, sighing; "such a tumult I have more than once experienced, without knowing the cause;—and where should I seek for an object, such as you describe, in this dismal solitude?"

A little further conversation ensued, and the first amatory lesson of the prince was complete.

"Alas!" said he, "if love be indeed such a delight, and its interruption such a misery, Allah forbid that I should mar the joy of any

of its votaries. He opened the cage, took out the dove, and having fondly kissed it, carried it to the window. "Go, happy bird," said he, "rejoice with the partner of thy heart in the days of youth and spring-time. Why should I make thee a fellow-prisoner in this dreary tower, where love can never enter?"

The dove flapped its wings in rapture, gave one vault into the air, and then swooped downward on whistling wings to the blooming bowers of the Darro.

The prince followed him with his eyes, and then gave way to bitter repining. The singing of the birds which once delighted him, now added to his bitterness. Love! love! love! Alas poor youth! he now understood the strain.

His eyes flashed fire when next he beheld the sage Bonabben. "Why hast thou kept me in this abject ignorance?" cried he. "Why has the great mystery and principle of life been withheld from me, in which I find the meanest

insect is so learned? Behold all nature is in a revel of delight. Every created being rejoices with its mate. This—this is the love about which I have sought instruction. Why am I alone debarred its enjoyment? Why has so much of my youth been wasted without a knowledge of its raptures?”

The sage Bonabben saw that all further reserve was useless ; for the prince had acquired the dangerous and forbidden knowledge. He revealed to him, therefore, the predictions of the astrologers, and the precautions that had been taken in his education to avert the threatened evils. “ And now, my prince,” added he, “ my life is in your hands. Let the king your father discover that you have learned the passion of love while under my guardianship, and my head must answer for it.”

The prince was as reasonable as most young men of his age, and easily listened to the remonstrances of his tutor, since nothing pleaded

against them. Besides, he really was attached to the sage Bonabben, and being as yet but theoretically acquainted with the passion of love, he consented to confine the knowledge of it to his own bosom, rather than endanger the head of the philosopher.

His discretion was doomed, however, to be put to still further proofs. A few mornings afterwards, as he was ruminating on the battlements of the tower, the dove which had been released by him came hovering in the air, and alighted fearlessly upon his shoulder.

The prince fondled it to his heart. "Happy bird," said he, "who can fly, as it were, with the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the earth. Where hast thou been since we parted?"

"In a far country, my prince, from whence I bring you tidings in reward for my liberty. In the wild compass of my flight, which extends over plain and mountain, as I was soaring in the air, I beheld below me a delightful garden,

with all kinds of fruits and flowers. It was in a green meadow, on the banks of a wandering stream; and in the centre of the garden was a stately palace. I alighted in one of the bowers to repose after my weary flight. On the green bank below me was a youthful princess, in the very sweetness and bloom of her years. She was surrounded by female attendants, young like herself, who decked her with garlands and coronets of flowers; but no flower of field or garden could compare with her for loveliness. Here, however, she bloomed in secret, for the garden was surrounded by high walls, and no mortal man was permitted to enter. When I beheld this beauteous maid, thus young and innocent and unspotted by the world, I thought, here is the being formed by heaven to inspire my prince with love."

The description was a spark of fire to the combustible heart of Ahmed; all the latent amorousness of his temperament had at once

found an object, and he conceived an immeasurable passion for the princess. He wrote a letter, couched in the most impassioned language, breathing his fervent devotion, but bewailing the unhappy thralldom of his person, which prevented him from seeking her out and throwing himself at her feet. He added couplets of the most tender and moving eloquence, for he was a poet by nature and inspired by love. He addressed his letter—"To the unknown beauty, from the captive Prince Ahmed;" then perfuming it with musk and roses, he gave it to the dove.

"Away, trustiest of messengers!" said he. Fly over mountain and valley and river and plain; rest not in bower, nor set foot on earth, until thou hast given this letter to the mistress of my heart."

The dove soared high in air, and taking his course darted away in one undeviating direction. The prince followed him with his eye until he

was a mere speck on a cloud, and gradually disappeared behind a mountain.

Day after day he watched for the return of the messenger of love, but he watched in vain. He began to accuse him of forgetfulness, when towards sunset one evening the faithful bird fluttered into his apartment, and falling at his feet expired. The arrow of some wanton archer had pierced his breast, yet he had struggled with the lingerings of life to execute his mission. As the prince bent with grief over this gentle martyr to fidelity, he beheld a chain of pearls round his neck, attached to which, beneath his wing, was a small enamelled picture. It represented a lovely princess in the very flower of her years. It was doubtless the unknown beauty of the garden ; but who and where was she—how had she received his letter, and was this picture sent as a token of her approval of his passion? Unfortunately the death of the faithful dove left every thing in mystery and doubt.

The prince gazed on the picture till his eyes swam with tears. He pressed it to his lips and to his heart, he sat for hours contemplating it almost in an agony of tenderness. "Beautiful image!" said he, "alas, thou art but an image!" Yet thy dewy eyes beam tenderly upon me; those rosy lips look as though they would speak encouragement: vain fancies! Have they not looked the same on some more happy rival? But where in this wide world shall I hope to find the original? Who knows what mountains, what realms may separate us — what adverse chances may intervene? Perhaps now, even now, lovers may be crowding around her, while I sit here a prisoner in a tower, wasting my time in adoration of a painted shadow."

The resolution of Prince Ahmed was taken. "I will fly from this palace," said he, "which has become an odious prison, and, a pilgrim of love, will seek this unknown princess throughout the world." To escape from the tower in the day,

when every one was awake, might be a difficult matter; but at night the palace was slightly guarded; for no one apprehended any attempt of the kind from the prince who had always been so passive in his captivity. How was he to guide himself, however, in his darkling flight, being ignorant of the country? He bethought him of the owl, who was accustomed to roam at night, and must know every by-lane and secret pass. Seeking him in his hermitage, he questioned him touching his knowledge of the land. Upon this the owl put on a mighty self-important look. "You must know, O prince," said he, "that we owls are of a very ancient and extensive family, though rather fallen to decay, and possess ruinous castles and palaces in all parts of Spain. There is scarcely a tower of the mountains, or a fortress of the plains or an old citadel of a city, but has some brother, or uncle, or cousin quartered in it; and in going the rounds to visit this my numerous kindred, I have pryed into every

nook and corner, and made myself acquainted with every secret of the land. The prince was overjoyed to find the owl so deeply versed in topography, and now informed him, in confidence, of his tender passion and his intended elopement, urging him to be his companion and counsellor.

“Go to!” said the owl with a look of displeasure, “am I a bird to engage in a love affair? I whose whole time is devoted to meditation and the moon?”

“Be not offended, most solemn owl,” replied the prince; “abstract thyself for a time from meditation and the moon, and aid me in my flight, and thou shalt have whatever heart can wish.”

“I have that already,” said the owl: “a few mice are sufficient for my frugal table, and this hole in the wall is spacious enough for my studies; and what more does a philosopher like myself desire?”

“Bethink thee, most wise owl, that while mop-

ing in thy cell and gazing at the moon, all thy talents are lost to the world. I shall one day be a sovereign prince, and may advance thee to some post of honour and dignity."

The owl, though a philosopher and above the ordinary wants of life, was not above ambition ; so he was finally prevailed on to elope with the prince, and be his guide and mentor in his pilgrimage.

The plans of a lover are promptly executed. The prince collected all his jewels, and concealed them about his person as travelling funds. That very night he lowered himself by his scarf from a balcony of the tower, clambered over the outer walls of the Generalife, and, guided by the owl, made good his escape before morning to the mountains.

He now held a council with his mentor as to his future course.

" Might I advise," said the owl, " I would recommend you to repair to Seville. You must

know, that many years since I was on a visit to an uncle, an owl of great dignity and power, who lived in a ruined wing of the Alcazar of that place. In my hoverings at night over the city I frequently remarked a light burning in a lonely tower. At length I alighted on the battlements, and found it to proceed from the lamp of an Arabian magician : he was surrounded by his magic books, and on his shoulder was perched his familiar, an ancient raven who had come with him from Egypt. I am acquainted with that raven, and owe to him a great part of the knowledge I possess. The magician is since dead, but the raven still inhabits the tower, for these birds are of wonderful long life. I would advise you, O prince, to seek that raven, for he is a soothsayer and a conjurer, and deals in the black art, for which all ravens, and especially those of Egypt, are renowned."

The prince was struck with the wisdom of this advice, and accordingly bent his course towards Seville. He travelled only in the night, to ac-

commodate his companion, and lay by during the day in some dark cavern or mouldering watch-tower, for the owl knew every hiding hole of the kind, and had a most antiquarian taste for ruins.

At length one morning at day-break they reached the city of Seville, where the owl, who hated the glare and bustle of crowded streets, halted without the gate and took up his quarters in a hollow tree.

The prince entered the gate and readily found the magic tower, which rose above the houses of the city, as a palm tree rises above the shrubs of the desert ; it was in fact the same tower that is standing at the present day, and known as the Giralda, the famous Moorish tower of Seville.

The prince ascended by a great winding staircase to the summit of the tower, where he found the cabalistic raven, an old, mysterious, grey-headed bird, ragged in feather, with a film over one eye that gave him the glare of a spectre. He was perched on one leg, with his head turned

on one side, poring with his remaining eye, on a diagram described on the pavement.

The prince approached him with the awe and reverence naturally inspired by his venerable appearance and supernatural wisdom. "Pardon me, most ancient and darkly wise raven," exclaimed he, "if for a moment I interrupt those studies which are the wonder of the world. You behold before you a votary of love, who would fain seek your counsel how to obtain the object of his passion."

"In other words," said the raven with a significant look, "you seek to try my skill in palmistry. Come, show me your hand, and let me decypher the mysterious lines of fortune."

"Excuse me," said the prince, "I come not to pry into the decrees of fate, which are hidden by Allah from the eyes of mortals; I am a pilgrim of love, and seek but to find a clue to the object of my pilgrimage."

"And can you be at any loss for an object in

amorous Andalusia?" said the old raven, leering upon him with his single eye; "above all, can you be at a loss in wanton Seville, where black-eyed damsels dance the zambra under every orange grove?"

The prince blushed, and was somewhat shocked at hearing an old bird with one foot in the grave, talk thus loosely. "Believe me," said he gravely, "I am on none such light and vagrant errand as thou dost insinuate. The black-eyed damsels of Andalusia who dance among the orange groves of the Guadalquiver are as nought to me. I seek one unknown but immaculate beauty, the original of this picture; and I beseech thee, most potent raven, if it be within the scope of thy knowledge or the reach of thy art, inform me where she may be found."

The grey-headed raven was rebuked by the gravity of the prince.

"What know I," replied he drily, "of youth

and beauty? my visits are to the old and withered, not the fresh and fair: the harbinger of fate am I; who croak bodings of death from the chimney top, and flap my wings at the sick man's window. You must seek elsewhere for tidings of your unknown beauty."

"And where can I seek, if not among the sons of wisdom, versed in the book of destiny? A royal prince am I, fated by the stars, and sent on a mysterious enterprise on which may hang the destiny of empires."

When the raven heard that it was a matter of vast moment in which the stars took interest, he changed his tone and manner, and listened with profound attention to the story of the prince. When it was concluded, he replied, "Touching this princess, I can give thee no information of myself, for my flight is not among gardens, or around lady's bowers; but hie thee to Cordova, seek the palm tree of the great Abderahman, which stands in the court of the principal mosque:

at the foot of it thou wilt find a great traveller who has visited all countries and courts, and been a favourite with queens and princesses. He will give thee tidings of the object of thy search."

"Many thanks for this precious information," said the prince. "Farewell, most venerable conjuror."

"Farewell, pilgrim of love," said the raven drily, and again fell to pondering on the diagram.

The prince sallied forth from Seville, sought his fellow-traveller the owl, who was still dozing in the hollow tree, and set off for Cordova.

He approached it along hanging gardens, and orange and citron groves, overlooking the fair valley of the Guadalquivir. When arrived at its gates the owl flew up to a dark hole in the wall, and the prince proceeded in quest of the palm tree planted in days of yore by the Great Abderahman. It stood in the midst of the great court of the Mosque, towering from amidst

orange and cypress trees. Dervises and Faquirs were seated in groups under the cloisters of the court, and many of the faithful were performing their ablutions at the fountains before entering the Mosque.

At the foot of the palm tree was a crowd listening to the words of one who appeared to be talking with great volubility. "This," said the prince to himself, "must be the great traveller who is to give me tidings of the unknown princess." He mingled in the crowd, but was astonished to perceive that they were all listening to a parrot, who with his bright green coat, pragmatical eye and consequential top-knot, had the air of a bird on excellent terms with himself.

"How is this," said the prince to one of the bystanders, "that so many grave persons can be delighted with the garrulity of a chattering bird?"

"You know not whom you speak of," said the other; "this parrot is a descendant of the famous

parrot of Persia, renowned for his story-telling talent. He has all the learning of the East at the tip of his tongue, and can quote poetry as fast as he can talk. He has visited various foreign courts, and where he has been considered an oracle of erudition. He has been a universal favourite also with the fair sex, who have a vast admiration for erudite parrots that can quote poetry."

"Enough," said the prince, "I will have some private talk with this distinguished traveller."

He sought a private interview and expounded the nature of his errand. He had scarcely mentioned it when the parrot burst into a fit of dry rickety laughter that absolutely brought tears in his eyes. "Excuse my merriment," said he, "but the mere mention of love always sets me laughing."

The prince was shocked at this ill-timed merriment. "Is not love," said he, "the great mys-

tery of nature, the secret principle of life, the universal bond of sympathy ? ”

“ A fig’s end ! ” cried the parrot interrupting him ; “ pr’ythee where hast thou learnt this sentimental jargon ? trust me, love is quite out of vogue ; one never hears of it in the company of wits and people of refinement.”

The Prince sighed as he recalled the different language of his friend the dove. But this parrot, thought he, has lived about the court, he affects the wit and the fine gentleman, he knows nothing of the thing called love. Unwilling to provoke any more ridicule of the sentiment which filled his heart, he now directed his inquiries to the immediate purport of his visit.

“ Tell me,” said he, “ most accomplished parrot, thou who hast every where been admitted to the most secret bowers of beauty, hast thou in the course of thy travels met with the original of this portrait ? ”

The parrot took the picture in his claw,

turned his head from side to side and examined it curiously with either eye. "Upon my honour," said he, "a very pretty face; very pretty: but then one sees so many pretty women in one's travels that one can hardly—but hold—bless me! now I look at it again—sure enough this is the Princess Aldegonda: how could I forget one that is so prodigious a favourite with me?"

"The Princess Aldegonda!" echoed the prince, "and where is she to be found?"

"Softly softly," said the parrot, "easier to be found than gained. She is the only daughter of the Christian King who reigns at Toledo, and is shut up from the world until her seventeenth birth-day, on account of some prediction of those meddlesome fellows the astrologers. You'll not get a sight of her—no mortal man can see her. I was admitted to her presence to entertain her, and I assure you, on the word of a parrot who has seen the world, I have conversed with much sillier princesses in my time."

“ A word in confidence, my dear parrot,” said the prince ; “ I am heir to a kingdom, and shall one day sit upon a throne. I see that you are a bird of parts, and understand the world. Help me to gain possession of this princess, and I will advance you to some distinguished place about court.”

“ With all my heart,” said the parrot ; “ but let it be a sinecure if possible, for we wits have a great dislike to labour.”

Arrangements were promptly made ; the prince sallied forth from Cordova through the same gate by which he had entered ; called the owl down from the hole in the wall, introduced him to his new travelling companion as a brother savant, and away they set off on their journey.

They travelled much more slowly than accorded with the impatience of the Prince, but the parrot was accustomed to high life, and did not like to be disturbed early in the morning. The owl on the other hand was for sleeping at



mid-day and lost a great deal of time by his long siestas. His antiquarian taste also was in the way ; for he insisted on pausing and inspecting every ruin, and had long legendary tales to tell about every old tower and castle in the country. The prince had supposed that he and the parrot, being both birds of learning, would delight in each other's society, but never had he been more mistaken. They were eternally bickering. The one was a wit, the other a philosopher. The Parrot quoted poetry, was critical on new readings and eloquent on small points of erudition ; the owl treated all such knowledge as trifling, and relished nothing but metaphysics. Then the parrot would sing songs and repeat bon mots and crack jokes upon his solemn neighbour, and laugh outrageously at his own wit ; all which proceedings the owl considered as a grievous invasion of his dignity, and would scowl and sulk and swell, and be silent for a whole day together.

The prince heeded not the wranglings of his companions, being wrapped up in the dreams of his own fancy and the contemplation of the portrait of the beautiful princess. In this way they journeyed through the stern passes of the Sierra Morena, across the sunburnt plains of La Mancha and Castile, and along the banks of the "Golden Tagus," which winds its wizard mazes over one half of Spain and Portugal. At length they came in sight of a strong city with walls and towers built on a rocky promontory, round the foot of which the Tagus circled with brawling violence.

"Behold," exclaimed the owl, "the ancient and renowned city of Toledo; a city famous for its antiquities. Behold those venerable domes and towers, hoary with time and clothed with legendary grandeur, in which so many of my ancestors have meditated."

"Pish!" cried the parrot, interrupting his solemn antiquarian rapture, "what have we to do

with antiquities, and legends, and your ancestry? Behold what is more to the purpose—behold the abode of youth and beauty—behold at length, O prince, the abode of your long sought princess.”

The prince looked in the direction indicated by the parrot, and beheld, in a delightful green meadow on the banks of the Tagus, a stately palace rising from amidst the bowers of a delicious garden. It was just such a place as had been described by the dove as the residence of the original of the picture. He gazed at it with a throbbing heart; “perhaps at this moment,” thought he, “the beautiful princess is sporting beneath those shady bowers, or pacing with delicate step those stately terraces, or reposing beneath those lofty roofs!” As he looked more narrowly he perceived that the walls of the garden were of great height, so as to defy access, while numbers of armed guards patrolled around them.

The prince turned to the parrot. “O most

accomplished of birds," said he, "thou hast the gift of human speech. Hie thee to yon garden ; seek the idol of my soul, and tell her that Prince Ahmed, a pilgrim of love, and guided by the stars, has arrived in quest of her on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The parrot, proud of his embassy, flew away to the garden, mounted above its lofty walls, and after soaring for a time over the lawns and groves, alighted on the balcony of a pavilion that overhung the river. Here, looking in at the casement, he beheld the princess reclining on a couch, with her eyes fixed on a paper, while tears gently stole after each other down her pallid cheek.

Pluming his wings for a moment, adjusting his bright green coat, and elevating his top-knot, the parrot perched himself beside her with a gallant air : then assuming a tenderness of tone, "Dry thy tears, most beautiful of princesses," said he, "I come to bring solace to thy heart."

The princess was startled on hearing a voice, but turning and seeing nothing but a little green-coated bird bobbing and bowing before her; "Alas! what solace canst thou yield," said she, "seeing thou art but a parrot?"

The parrot was nettled at the question. "I have consoled many beautiful ladies in my time," said he; "but let that pass. At present I come ambassador from a royal prince. Know that Ahmed, the prince of Granada, has arrived in quest of thee, and is encamped even now on the flowery banks of the Tagus."

The eyes of the beautiful princess sparkled at these words even brighter than the diamonds in her coronet. "O sweetest of parrots," cried she, "joyful indeed are thy tidings, for I was faint and weary, and sick almost unto death with doubt of the constancy of Ahmed. Hie thee back, and tell him that the words of his letter are engraven in my heart, and his poetry has been the food of my soul. Tell him, how-

ever, that he must prepare to prove his love by force of arms ; to-morrow is my seventeenth birthday, when the king my father holds a great tournament ; several princes are to enter the lists, and my hand is to be the prize of the victor."

The parrot again took wing, and rustling through the groves, flew back to where the prince awaited his return. The rapture of Ahmed on finding the original of his adored portrait, and finding her kind and true, can only be conceived by those favoured mortals who have had the good fortune to realize day-dreams and turn a shadow into substance : still there was one thing that alloyed his transport—this impending tournament. In fact, the banks of the Tagus were already glittering with arms, and resounding with trumpets of the various knights, who, with proud retinues, were prancing on towards Toledo to attend the ceremonial, The same star that had controlled the destiny

of the prince, had governed that of the princess, and until her seventeenth birthday she had been shut up from the world, to guard her from the tender passion. The fame of her charms, however, had been enhanced rather than obscured by this seclusion. Several powerful princes had contended for her alliance; and her father, who was a king of wondrous shrewdness, to avoid making enemies by showing partiality, had referred them to the arbitrement of arms. Among the rival candidates were several renowned for strength and prowess. What a predicament for the unfortunate Ahmed, unprovided as he was with weapons, and unskilled in the exercises of chivalry! "Luckless prince that I am!" said he, "to have been brought up in seclusion under the eye of a philosopher! Of what avail are algebra and philosophy in affairs of love? Alas, Eben Bonabben! why hast thou neglected to instruct me in the management of arms?" Upon this the owl broke silence, preluding his

harangue with a pious ejaculation, for he was a devout Mussulman.

“Allah Akbar! God is great!” exclaimed he; “in his hands are all secret things—he alone governs the destiny of princes! Know, O prince, that this land is full of mysteries, hidden from all but those who, like myself, can grope after knowledge in the dark. Know that in the neighbouring mountains there is a cave, and in that cave there is an iron table, and on that table there lies a suit of magic armour, and beside that table there stands a spell-bound steed, which have been shut up there for many generations.”

The prince stared with wonder, while the owl, blinking his huge round eyes, and erecting his horns, proceeded.

“Many years since, I accompanied my father to these parts on a tour of his estates, and we sojourned in that cave; and thus became I acquainted with the mystery. It is a tradition

in our family which I have heard from my grandfather, when I was yet but a very little owlet, that this armour belonged to a Moorish magician, who took refuge in this cavern when Toledo was captured by the Christians, and died here, leaving his steed and weapons under a mystic spell, never to be used but by a Moslem, and by him only from sunrise to mid-day. In that interval, whoever uses them will overthrow every opponent."

"Enough: let us seek this cave!" exclaimed Ahmed.

Guided by his legendary mentor, the prince found the cavern, which was in one of the wildest recesses of those rocky cliffs which rise around Toledo; none but the mousing eye of an owl or an antiquary could have discovered the entrance to it. A sepulchral lamp of everlasting oil shed a solemn light through the place. On an iron table in the centre of the cavern lay the magic armour, against it leaned the lance,

and beside it stood an Arabian steed, caparisoned for the field, but motionless as a statue. The armour was bright and unsullied as it had gleamed in days of old; the steed in as good condition as if just from the pasture; and when Ahmed laid his hand upon his neck, he pawed the ground and gave a loud neigh of joy that shook the walls of the cavern. Thus amply provided with "horse to ride and weapon to wear," the prince determined to defy the field in the impending tourney.

The eventful morning arrived. The lists for the combat were prepared in the Vega, or plain, just below the cliff-built walls of Toledo, where stages and galleries were erected for the spectators, covered with rich tapestry, and sheltered from the sun by silken awnings. All the beauties of the land were assembled in those galleries, while below pranced plumed knights with their pages and esquires, among whom figured conspicuously the princes who were to

contend in the tourney. All the beauties of the land, however, were eclipsed when the princess Aldegonda appeared in the royal pavilion, and for the first time broke forth upon the gaze of an admiring world. A murmur of wonder ran through the crowd at her transcendent loveliness ; and the princes who were candidates for her hand, merely on the faith of her reported charms, now felt tenfold ardour for the conflict.

The princess, however, had a troubled look. The colour came and went from her cheek, and her eye wandered with a restless and unsatisfied expression over the plumed throng of knights. The trumpets were about sounding for the encounter, when the herald announced the arrival of a stranger knight ; and Ahmed rode into the field. A steeled helmet studded with gems rose above his turban ; his cuirass was embossed with gold ; his scymetar and dagger were of the workmanship of Fez, and flamed with precious stones. A round shield was at his shoulder,

and in his hand he bore the lance of charmed virtue. The caparison of his Arabian steed was richly embroidered and swept the ground, and the proud animal pranced and snuffed the air, and neighed with joy at once more beholding the array of arms. The lofty and graceful demeanour of the prince struck every eye, and when his appellation was announced, "The Pilgrim of Love," an universal flutter and agitation prevailed among the fair dames in the galleries.

When Ahmed presented himself at the lists, however, they were closed against him: none but princes, he was told, were admitted to the contest. He declared his name and rank. "Still worse!"—he was a Moslem, and could not engage in a tourney where the hand of a Christian princess was the prize.

The rival princes surrounded him with haughty and menacing aspects; and one of insolent demeanour and herculean frame sneered

at his light and youthful form, and scoffed at his amorous appellation. The ire of the prince was roused. He defied his rival to the encounter. They took distance, wheeled, and charged; and at the first touch of the magic lance, the brawny scoffer was tilted from his saddle. Here the prince would have paused, but alas! he had to deal with a demoniac horse and armour—once in action nothing could controul them. The Arabian steed charged into the thickest of the throng; the lance overturned every thing that presented; the gentle prince was carried pell-mell about the field, strewing it with high and low, gentle and simple, and grieving at his own involuntary exploits. The king stormed and raged at this outrage on his subjects and his guests. He ordered out all his guards—they were unhorsed as fast as they came up. The king threw off his robes, grasped buckler and lance, and rode forth to awe the stranger with the presence of majesty itself. Alas! majesty

fared no better than the vulgar—the steed and lance were no respecters of persons; to the dismay of Ahmed, he was borne full tilt against the king, and in a moment the royal heels were in the air, and the crown was rolling in the dust.

At this moment the sun reached the meridian; the magic spell resumed its power; the Arabian steed scoured across the plain, leaped the barrier, plunged into the Tagus, swam its raging current, bore the prince breathless and amazed to the cavern, and resumed his station like a statue, beside the iron table. The prince dismounted right gladly, and replaced the armour, to abide the further decrees of fate. Then seating himself in the cavern, he ruminated on the desperate state to which this demoniac steed and armour had reduced him. Never should he dare to show his face at Toledo after inflicting such disgrace upon its chivalry, and such an outrage on its king. What too would the princess think

of so rude and riotous an achievement? Full of anxiety, he sent forth his winged messengers to gather tidings. The parrot resorted to all the public places and crowded resorts of the city, and soon returned with a world of gossip. All Toledo was in consternation. The princess had been borne off senseless to the palace; the tournament had ended in confusion; every one was talking of the sudden apparition, prodigious exploits, and strange disappearance of the Moslem knight. Some pronounced him a Moorish magician; others thought him a demon who had assumed a human shape, while others related traditions of enchanted warriors hidden in the caves of the mountains, and thought it might be one of these, who had made a sudden irruption from his den. All agreed that no mere ordinary mortal could have wrought such wonders, or unhorsed such accomplished and stalwart Christian warriors.

The owl flew forth at night and hovered about

the dusky city, perching on the roofs and chimneys. He then wheeled his flight up to the royal palace, which stood on the rocky summit of Toledo, and went prowling about its terraces and battlements, eyes dropping at every cranny, and glaring in with his big goggling eyes at every window where there was a light, so as to throw two or three maids of honour into fits. It was not until the grey dawn began to peer above the mountains that he returned from his mousing expedition, and related to the prince what he had seen.

“As I was prying about one of the loftiest towers of the palace,” said he, “I beheld through a casement a beautiful princess. She was reclining on a couch with attendants and physicians around her, but she would none of their ministry and relief. When they retired I beheld her draw forth a letter from her bosom, and read and kiss it, and give way to loud lamentations; at which, philosopher as I am, I could not but be greatly moved.”

The tender heart of Ahmed was distressed at these tidings. "Too true were thy words, O sage Eben Bonabben," cried he; "care and sorrow and sleepless nights are the lot of lovers. Allah preserve the princess from the blighting influence of this thing called love!"

Further intelligence from Toledo corroborated the report of the owl. The city was a prey to uneasiness and alarm. The princess was conveyed to the highest tower of the palace, every avenue to which was strongly guarded. In the mean time a devouring melancholy had seized upon her, of which no one could divine the cause—she refused food and turned a deaf ear to every consolation. The most skilful physicians had essayed their art in vain; it was thought some magic spell had been practised upon her, and the king made proclamation, declaring that whoever should effect her cure should receive the richest jewel in the royal treasury.

When the owl, who was dozing in a corner,

heard of this proclamation, he rolled his large eyes and looked more mysterious than ever.

“Allah Akbar!” exclaimed he, “happy the man that shall effect that cure, should he but know what to choose from the royal treasury.”

“What mean you, most reverend owl?” said Ahmed.

“Hearken, O prince, to what I shall relate. We owls, you must know, are a learned body, and much given to dark and dusty research. During my late prowling at night about the domes and turrets of Toledo, I discovered a college of antiquarian owls, who hold their meetings in a great vaulted tower where the royal treasury is deposited. Here they were discussing the forms and inscriptions and designs of ancient gems and jewels, and of golden and silver vessels, heaped up in the treasury, the fashion of every country and age; but mostly they were interested about certain reliques and talismans that have remained in the treasury since the time of Rode-

rick the Goth. Among these was a box of sandal wood secured by bands of steel of Oriental workmanship, and inscribed with mystic characters known only to the learned few. This box and its inscription had occupied the college for several sessions, and had caused much long and grave dispute. At the time of my visit a very ancient owl, who had recently arrived from Egypt, was seated on the lid of the box lecturing upon the inscription, and he proved from it that the coffer contained the silken carpet of the throne of Solomon the wise ; which doubtless had been brought to Toledo by the Jews who took refuge there after the downfall of Jerusalem."

When the owl had concluded his antiquarian harangue the prince remained for a time absorbed in thought. " I have heard," said he, " from the sage Eben Bonabben, of the wonderful properties of that talisman, which disappeared at the fall of Jerusalem, and was supposed to be lost to mankind. Doubtless it re-

mains a sealed mystery to the Christians of Toledo. If I can get possession of that carpet my fortune is secure."

The next day the prince laid aside his rich attire, and arrayed himself in the simple garb of an Arab of the desert. He dyed his complexion to a tawny hue, and no one could have recognized in him the splendid warrior who had caused such admiration and dismay at the tournament. With staff in hand and scrip by his side and a small pastoral reed, he repaired to Toledo, and presenting himself at the gate of the royal palace, announced himself as a candidate for the reward offered for the cure of the princess. The guards would have driven him away with blows. "What can a vagrant Arab like thyself pretend to do," said they, "in a case where the most learned of the land have failed?" The king, however, overheard the tumult, and ordered the Arab to be brought into his presence.

"Most potent king," said Ahmed, "you behold

before you a Bedouin Arab, the greater part of whose life has been passed in the solitudes of the desert. These solitudes, it is well known, are the haunts of demons and evil spirits, who beset us poor shepherds in our lonely watchings, enter into and possess our flocks and herds, and sometimes render even the patient camel furious; against these our counter-charm is music; and we have legendary airs handed down from generation to generation, that we chant and pipe, to cast forth these evil spirits. I am of a gifted line, and possess this power in its fullest force. If it be any evil influence of the kind that holds a spell over thy daughter, I pledge my head to free her from its sway."

The king, who was a man of understanding and knew the wonderful secrets possessed by the Arabs, was inspired with hope by the confident language of the prince. He conducted him immediately to the lofty tower, secured by several doors, in the summit of which was the chamber of the princess. The windows opened upon a

terrace with balustrades, commanding a view over Toledo and all the surrounding country. The windows were darkened, for the princess lay within, a prey to a devouring grief that refused all alleviation.

The prince seated himself on the terrace and performed several wild Arabian airs on his pastoral pipe, which he had learnt from his attendants in the Generalife at Granada. The princess continued insensible, and the doctors who were present shook their heads and smiled with incredulity and contempt: at length the prince lay aside the reed, and, to a simple melody, chanted the amatory verses of the letter which had declared his passion.

The princess recognized the strain—a fluttering joy stole to her heart; she raised her head and listened; tears rushed to her eyes and streamed down her cheeks; her bosom rose and fell with a tumult of emotions. She would have asked for the minstrel to be brought into

her presence, but maiden coyness held her silent. The king read her wishes, and at his command Ahmed was conducted into the chamber. The lovers were discreet: they but exchanged glances, yet those glances spoke volumes. Never was triumph of music more complete. The rose had returned to the soft cheek of the princess, the freshness to her lip, and the dewy light to her languishing eyes.

All the physicians present stared at each other with astonishment. The king regarded the Arab minstrel with admiration mixed with awe. "Wonderful youth!" exclaimed he, "thou shalt henceforth be the first physician of my court, and no other prescription will I take but thy melody. For the present receive thy reward, the most precious jewel in my treasury."

"O king," replied Ahmed, "I care not for silver or gold or precious stones. One relique hast thou in thy treasury, handed down from the Moslems who once owned Toledo—a box

of sandal wood containing a silken carpet : give me that box and I am content."

All present were surprised at the moderation of the Arab ; and still more when the box of sandal wood was brought and the carpet drawn forth. It was of fine green silk, covered with Hebrew and Chaldaic characters. The court physicians looked at each other, and shrugged their shoulders, and smiled at the simplicity of this new practitioner, who could be content with so paltry a fee.

" This carpet," said the prince, " once covered the throne of Solomon the wise ; it is worthy of being placed beneath the feet of beauty."

So saying, he spread it on the terrace beneath an ottoman that had been brought forth for the princess ; then seating himself at her feet—

" Who," said he, " shall counteract what is written in the book of fate ? Behold the prediction of the astrologers verified. Know, O king, that your daughter and I have long loved each

other in secret. Behold in me the Pilgrim of Love!"

These words were scarcely from his lips, when the carpet rose in the air, bearing off the prince and princess. The king and the physicians gazed after it with open mouths and straining eyes until it became a little speck on the white bosom of a cloud, and then disappeared in the blue vault of heaven.

The king in a rage summoned his treasurer. "How is this," said he, "that thou hast suffered an infidel to get possession of such a talisman?"

"Alas, sir, we knew not its nature, nor could we decypher the inscription of the box. If it be indeed the carpet of the throne of the wise Solomon, it is possessed of magic power, and can transport its owner from place to place through the air."

The king assembled a mighty army, and set off for Granada in pursuit of the fugitives. His march was long and toilsome. Encamping in

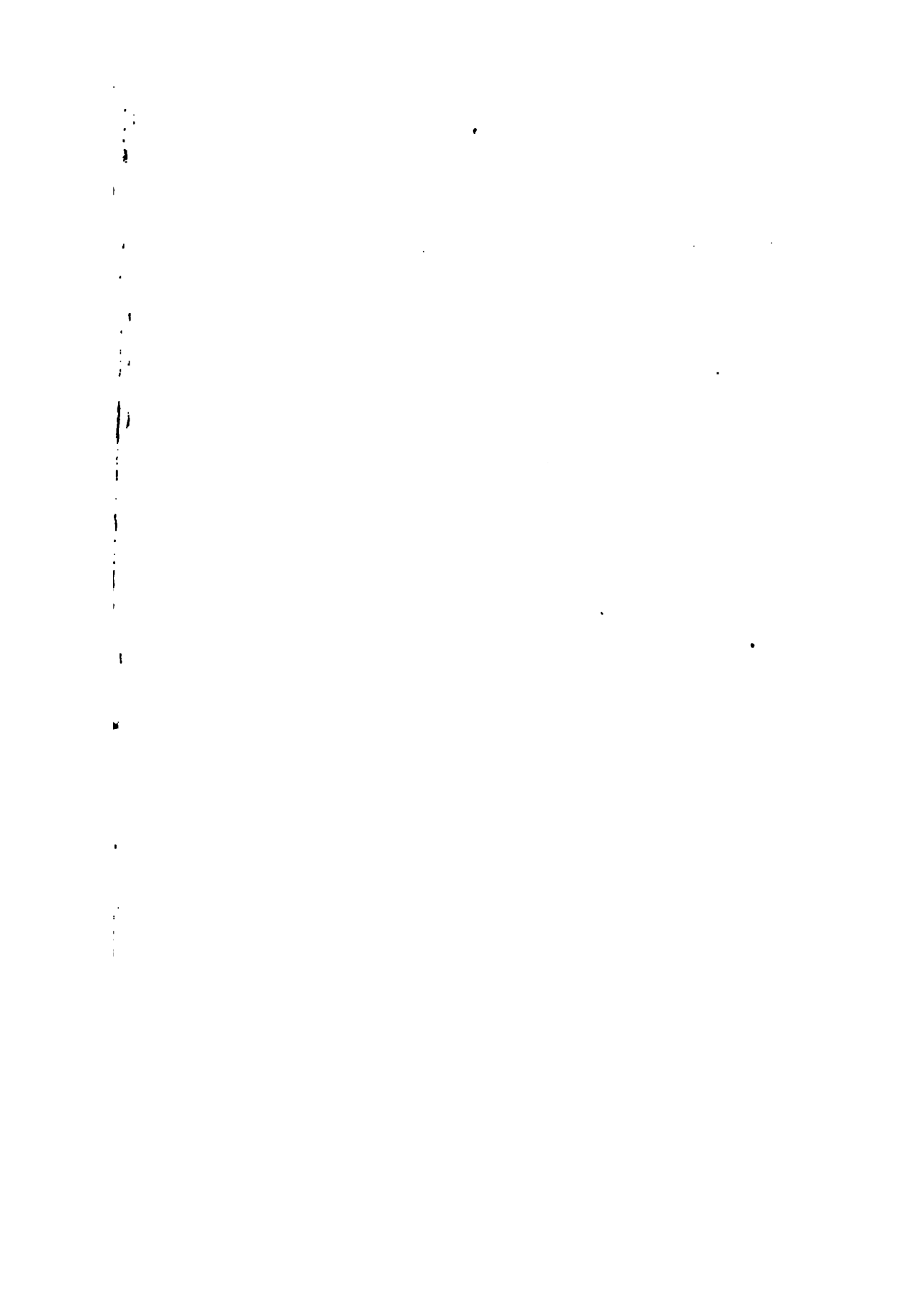
the Vega, he sent a herald to demand restitution of his daughter. The king himself came forth with all his court to meet him. In the king he beheld the real minstrel, for Ahmed had succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, and the beautiful Aldegonda was his sultana.

The Christian king was easily pacified when he found that his daughter was suffered to continue in her faith ; not that he was particularly pious ; but religion is always a point of pride and etiquette with princes. Instead of bloody battles, there was a succession of feasts and rejoicings, after which the king returned well pleased to Toledo, and the youthful couple continued to reign as happily as wisely in the Alhambra.

It is proper to add, that the owl and the parrot had severally followed the prince by easy stages to Granada ; the former travelling by night, and stopping at the various hereditary possessions of his family ; the latter figuring in gay circles of every town and city on his route.

Ahmed gratefully requited the services which they had rendered on his pilgrimage. He appointed the owl his prime minister, the parrot his master of ceremonies. It is needless to say that never was a realm more sagely administered, or a court conducted with more exact punctilio.

LEGEND
OF
THE MOOR'S LEGACY.



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Just within the fortress of the Alhambra, in front of the royal palace, is a broad open esplanade, called the Place or Square of the Cisterns, (la Plaza de los Algibes,) so called from being undermined by reservoirs of water, hidden from sight, and which have existed from the time of the Moors. At one corner of this esplanade is a Moorish well, cut through the living rock to a great depth, the water of which is cold as ice and clear as crystal. The wells made by the

Moors are always in repute, for it is well known what pains they took to penetrate to the purest and sweetest springs and fountains. The one of which we now speak is famous throughout Granada, insomuch that the water carriers, some bearing great water jars on their shoulders, others driving asses before them laden with earthen vessels, are ascending and descending the steep woody avenues of the Alhambra, from early dawn until a late hour of the night.

Fountains and wells, ever since the scriptural days, have been noted gossiping places in hot climates, and at the well in question there is a kind of perpetual club kept up during the live-long day, by the invalids, old women, and other curious do-nothing folk of the fortress, who sit here on the stone benches, under an awning spread over the well to shelter the toll-gatherer from the sun, and dawdle over the gossip of the fortress, and question every water carrier that arrives, about the news of the city, and make

long comments on every thing they hear and see. Not an hour of the day but loitering housewives and idle maid-servants may be seen, lingering with pitcher on head or in hand, to hear the last of the endless tattle of these worthies.

Among the water carriers who once resorted to this well, there was a sturdy, strong-backed, bandy-legged little fellow, named Pedro Gil, but called Peregil for shortness. Being a water carrier, he was a Gallego, or native of Gallicia, of course. Nature seems to have formed races of men, as she has of animals, for different kinds of drudgery. In France the shoe-blacks are all Savoyards, the porters of hotels all Swiss, and in the days of hoops and hair-powder in England, no man could give the regular swing to a sedan-chair but a bog-trotting Irishman. So in Spain, the carriers of water and bearers of burdens are all sturdy little natives of Gallicia. No man says, "Get me a porter," but, "Call a Gallego."

To return from this digression, Peregil the Gallego had begun business with merely a great earthen jar which he carried upon his shoulder ; by degrees he rose in the world, and was enabled to purchase an assistant of a correspondent class of animals, being a stout shaggy-haired donkey. On each side of this his long-eared aid-de-camp, in a kind of pannier, were slung his water-jars, covered with fig-leaves to protect them from the sun. There was not a more industrious water carrier in all Granada, nor one more merry withal. The streets rang with his cheerful voice as he trudged after his donkey, singing forth the usual summer note that resounds through the Spanish towns : “ *Quien quiere agua—agua mas fria que la nieve?* ” — “ Who wants water—water colder than snow ? Who wants water from the well of the Alhambra, cold as ice and clear as crystal ? ” When he served a customer with a sparkling glass, it was always with a pleasant word that caused

a smile ; and if, perchance, it was a comely dame or dimpling damsel, it was always with a sly leer and a compliment to her beauty that was irresistible. Thus Peregil the Gallego was noted throughout all Granada for being one of the civilest, pleasantest, and happiest of mortals. Yet it is not he who sings loudest and jokes most that has the lightest heart. Under all this air of merriment, honest Peregil had his cares and troubles. He had a large family of ragged children to support, who were hungry and clamorous as a nest of young swallows, and beset him with their outcries for food whenever he came home of an evening. He had a helpmate too, who was any thing but a help to him. She had been a village beauty before marriage, noted for her skill at dancing the bolero and rattling the castañets ; and she still retained her early propensities, spending the hard earnings of honest Peregil in frippery, and laying the very donkey under requisition for junketting

parties into the country on Sundays, and saints' days and those innumerable holidays which are rather more numerous in Spain than the days of the week. With all this she was a little of a slattern, something more of a lie a-bed, and, above all, a gossip of the first water ; neglecting house, household, and every thing else, to loiter slip-shod in the houses of her gossip neighbours.

He, however, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, accommodates the yoke of matrimony to the submissive neck. Peregil bore all the heavy dispensations of wife and children with as meek a spirit as his donkey bore the water-jars ; and, however he might shake his ears in private, never ventured to question the household virtues of his slattern spouse.

He loved his children too even as an owl loves its owlets, seeing in them his own image multiplied and perpetuated ; for they were a sturdy, long-backed, bandy-legged little brood.

The great pleasure of honest Peregil was, whenever he could afford himself a scanty holiday, and had a handful of marevedis to spare, to take the whole litter forth with him, some in his arms, some tugging at his skirts, and some trudging at his heels, and to treat them to a gambol among the orchards of the Vega, while his wife was dancing with her holiday friends in the Angosturas of the Darro.

It was a late hour one summer night, and most of the water carriers had desisted from their toils. The day had been uncommonly sultry; the night was one of those delicious moonlights, which tempt the inhabitants of those southern climes to indemnify themselves for the heat and inaction of the day, by lingering in the open air and enjoying its tempered sweetness until after midnight. Customers for water were therefore still abroad. Peregil, like a considerate pains-taking little father, thought of his hungry children. "One more journey to the well,"

said he to himself, "to earn a Sunday's puchero for the little ones." So saying, he trudged manfully up the steep avenue of the Alhambra, singing as he went, and now and then bestowing a hearty thwack with a cudgel on the flanks of his donkey, either by way of cadence to the song, or refreshment to the animal; for dry blows serve in lieu of provender in Spain for all beasts of burden.

When arrived at the well, he found it deserted by every one except a solitary stranger in Moorish garb, seated on the stone bench in the moonlight. Peregil paused at first and regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with awe, but the Moor feebly beckoned him to approach. "I am faint and ill," said he, "aid me to return to the city, and I will pay thee double what thou couldst gain by thy jars of water."

The honest heart of the little water carrier was touched with compassion at the appeal of the stranger. "God forbid," said he, "that I

should ask fee or reward for doing a common act of humanity." He accordingly helped the Moor on his donkey, and set off slowly for Granada, the poor Moslem being so weak that it was necessary to hold him on the animal to keep him from falling to the earth.

When they entered the city, the water carrier demanded whither he should conduct him. "Alas!" said the Moor faintly, "I have neither home nor habitation, I am a stranger in the land. Suffer me to lay my head this night beneath thy roof, and thou shalt be amply repaid."

Honest Peregil thus saw himself unexpectedly saddled with an infidel guest, but he was too humane to refuse a night's shelter to a fellow being in so forlorn a plight, so he conducted the Moor to his dwelling. The children, who had sallied forth open mouthed as usual on hearing the tramp of the donkey, ran back with afright, when they beheld the turbaned stranger, and hid themselves behind their mother. The

latter stepped forth intrepidly, like a ruffling hen before her brood when a vagrant dog approaches.

“What infidel companion,” cried she, “is this you have brought home at this late hour, to draw upon us the eyes of the Inquisition?”

“Be quiet, wife,” replied the Gallego, “here is a poor sick stranger, without friend or home; wouldst thou turn him forth to perish in the streets?”

The wife would still have remonstrated, for although she lived in a hovel she was a furious stickler for the credit of her house; the little water carrier, however, for once was stiffnecked, and refused to bend beneath the yoke. He assisted the poor Moslem to alight, and spread a mat and a sheep-skin for him, on the ground, in the coolest part of the house; being the only kind of bed that his poverty afforded.

In a little while the Moor was seized with violent convulsions, which defied all the ministering skill of the simple water carrier. The

eye of the poor patient acknowledged his kindness. During an interval of his fits he called him to his side, and addressing him in a low voice, "My end," said he, "I fear is at hand. If I die I bequeath you this box as a reward for your charity:" so saying, he opened his albornoz, or cloak, and showed a small box of sandal wood, strapped round his body. "God grant, my friend," replied the worthy little Gallego, "that you may live many years to enjoy your treasure, whatever it may be." The Moor shook his head; he laid his hand upon the box, and would have said something more concerning it, but his convulsions returned with increased violence, and in a little while he expired.

The water carrier's wife was now as one distracted. "This comes," said she, "of your foolish good nature, always running into scrapes to oblige others. What will become of us when this corpse is found in our house? We shall be

sent to prison as murderers; and if we escape with our lives, shall be ruined by notaries and alguazils.

Poor Peregil was in equal tribulation, and almost repented himself of having done a good deed. At length a thought struck him. "It is not yet day," said he; "I can convey the dead body out of the city, and bury it in the sands on the banks of the Xenil. No one saw the Moor enter our dwelling, and no one will know any thing of his death."

So said, so done. The wife aided him; they rolled the body of the unfortunate Moslem in the mat on which he had expired, laid it across the ass, and Peregil set out with it for the banks of the river.

As ill luck would have it, there lived opposite to the water carrier a barber named Pedrillo Pedrugo, one of the most prying, tattling, and mischief-making of his gossip tribe. He was a weasle-faced, spider-legged varlet, supple and

insinuating ; the famous barber of Seville could not surpass him for his universal knowledge of the affairs of others, and he had no more power of retention than a sieve. It was said that he slept but with one eye at a time, and kept one ear uncovered, so that, even in his sleep, he might see and hear all that was going on. Certain it is, he was a sort of scandalous chronicle for the quid-nuncs of Granada, and had more customers than all the rest of his fraternity.

This meddlesome barber heard Peregil arrive at an unusual hour at night, and the exclamations of his wife and children. His head was instantly popped out of a little window which served him as a look-out, and he saw his neighbour assist a man in Moorish garb into his dwelling. This was so strange an occurrence, that Pedrillo Pedrugo slept not a wink that night. Every five minutes he was at his loophole, watching the lights that gleamed through the chinks of his neighbour's door, and before

daylight he beheld Peregil sally forth with his donkey unusually laden.

The inquisitive barber was in a fidget; he slipped on his clothes, and, stealing forth silently, followed the water carrier at a distance, until he saw him dig a hole in the sandy bank of the Xenil, and bury something that had the appearance of a dead body.

The barber hied him home, and fidgetted about his shop, setting every thing upside down, until sunrise. He then took a basin under his arm, and sallied forth to the house of his daily customer the alcalde.

The alcalde was just risen. Pedrillo Pedrugo seated him in a chair, threw a napkin round his neck, put a basin of hot water under his chin, and began to mollify his beard with his fingers.

“Strange doings!” said Pedrugo, who played barber and news monger at the same time—
“Strange doings! Robbery, and murder, and burial, all in one night!”

“ Hey!—how!—what is that you say?” cried the alcalde.

“ I say,” replied the barber, rubbing a piece of soap over the nose and mouth of the dignitary, for a Spanish barber disdains to employ a brush—“ I say that Peregil the Gallego has robbed and murdered a Moorish Mussulman, and buried him, this blessed night. *Maldita sea la noche*—accursed be the night for the same!”

“ But how do you know all this?” demanded the alcalde.

“ Be patient, Señor, and you shall hear all about it,” replied Pedrillo, taking him by the nose and sliding a razor over his cheek. He then recounted all that he had seen, going through both operations at the same time, shaving his beard, washing his chin, and wiping him dry with a dirty napkin, while he was robbing, murdering, and burying the Moslem.

Now it so happened that this alcalde was one of the most overbearing, and at the same time

most griping and corrupt curmudgeons in all Granada. It could not be denied, however, that he set a high value upon justice, for he sold it at its weight in gold. He presumed the case in point to be one of murder and robbery; doubtless there must be rich spoil; how was it to be secured into the legitimate hands of the law? for as to merely entrapping the delinquent—that would be feeding the gallows; but entrapping the booty—that would be enriching the judge, and such, according to his creed, was the great end of justice. So thinking, he summoned to his presence his trustiest alguazil—a gaunt, hungry looking varlet, clad according to the custom of his order, in the ancient Spanish garb, a broad black beaver turned up at the sides; a quaint ruff; a small black cloak dangling from his shoulders; rusty black under-clothes that set off his spare wiry frame, while in his hand he bore a slender white wand, the dreaded insignia of his office. Such was the legal bloodhound of

the ancient Spanish breed, that he put upon the traces of the unlucky water carrier, and such was his speed and certainty, that he was upon the haunches of poor Peregil before he had returned to his dwelling, and brought both him and his donkey before the dispenser of justice.

The alcalde bent upon him one of his most terrific frowns. "Hark ye, culprit!" roared he, in a voice that made the knees of the little Gallego smite together—"hark ye, culprit! there is no need of denying thy guilt, every thing is known to me. A gallows is the proper reward for the crime thou hast committed, but I am merciful, and readily listen to reason. The man that has been murdered in thy house was a Moor, an infidel, the enemy of our faith. It was doubtless in a fit of religious zeal that thou hast slain him. I will be indulgent, therefore; render up the property of which thou hast robbed him, and we will hush the matter up."

The poor water carrier called upon all the

saints to witness his innocence ; alas ! not one of them appeared ; and if they had, the *alcalde* would have disbelieved the whole calendar. The water carrier related the whole story of the dying Moor with the straight forward simplicity of truth, but it was all in vain. "Wilt thou persist in saying," demanded the judge, "that this Moslem had neither gold nor jewels, which were the object of thy cupidity?"

"As I hope to be saved, your worship," replied the water carrier, "he had nothing but a small box of sandal wood, which he bequeathed to me in reward for my services."

"A box of sandal wood ! a box of sandal-wood !" exclaimed the *alcalde*, his eyes sparkling at the idea of precious jewels. "And where is this box ? where have you concealed it ?"

"An' it please your grace," replied the water carrier, "it is in one of the panniers of my mule, and heartily at the service of your worship."

He had hardly spoken the words, when the

keen alguazil darted off and re-appeared in an instant with the mysterious box of sandal wood. The alcalde opened it with an eager and trembling hand; all pressed forward to gaze upon the treasures it was expected to contain; when, to their disappointment, nothing appeared within, but a parchment scroll, covered with Arabic characters, and an end of a waxen taper.

When there is nothing to be gained by the conviction of a prisoner, justice, even in Spain, is apt to be impartial. The alcalde having recovered from his disappointment, and found that there was really no booty in the case, now listened dispassionately to the explanation of the water carrier, which was corroborated by the testimony of his wife. Being convinced, therefore, of his innocence, he discharged him from arrest; nay more, he permitted him to carry off the Moor's legacy, the box of sandal wood and its contents, as the well-merited reward of his

humanity; but he retained his donkey in payment of cost and charges.

Behold the unfortunate little Gallego reduced once more to the necessity of being his own water carrier, and trudging up to the well of the Alhambra with a great earthen jar upon his shoulder.

As he toiled up the hill in the heat of a summer noon, his usual good humour forsook him. "Dog of an alcalde!" would he cry, "to rob a poor man of the means of his subsistence, of the best friend he had in the world!" And then, at the remembrance of the beloved companion of his labours, all the kindness of his nature would break forth. "Ah donkey of my heart!" would he exclaim, resting his burden on a stone, and wiping the sweat from his brow—"Ah donkey of my heart! I warrant me thou thinkest of thy old master! I warrant me thou missest the water-jars—poor beast!"

To add to his afflictions, his wife received

him, on his return home, with whimperings and repinings; she had clearly the vantage ground of him, having warned him not to commit the egregious act of hospitality that had brought on him all these misfortunes; and like a knowing woman, she took every occasion to throw her superior sagacity in his teeth. If ever her children lacked food, or needed a new garment, she could answer with a sneer—"Go to your father—he is heir to king Chico of the Alhambra: ask him to help you out of the Moor's strong-box."

Was ever poor mortal so soundly punished for having done a good action? The unlucky Peregil was grieved in flesh and spirit, but still he bore meekly with the railings of his spouse. At length, one evening, when, after a hot day's toil, she taunted him in the usual manner, he lost all patience. He did not venture to retort upon her, but his eye rested upon the box of sandal wood, which lay on a shelf with lid hall

open, as if laughing in mockery at his vexation. Seizing it up, he dashed it with indignation to the floor:—"Unlucky was the day that I ever set eyes on thee," he cried, "or sheltered thy master beneath my roof!"

As the box struck the floor, the lid flew wide open, and the parchment scroll rolled forth. Peregil sat regarding the scroll for some time in moody silence. At length rallying his ideas—"Who knows," thought he, "but this writing may be of some importance, as the Moor seems to have guarded it with such care?" Picking it up therefore, he put it in his bosom, and the next morning, as he was crying water through the streets, he stopped at the shop of a Moor, a native of Tangiers, who sold trinkets and perfumery in the Zacatin, and asked him to explain the contents.

The Moor read the scroll attentively, then stroked his beard and smiled. "This manuscript," said he, "is a form of incantation for

the recovery of hidden treasure, that is under the power of enchantment. It is said to have such virtue, that the strongest bolts and bars, nay the adamant rock itself, will yield before it!"

"Bah!" cried the little Gallego, "what is all that to me? I am no enchanter, and know nothing of buried treasure." So saying, he shouldered his water-jar, left the scroll in the hands of the Moor, and trudged forward on his daily rounds.

That evening, however, as he rested himself about twilight at the well of the Alhambra, he found a number of gossips assembled at the place, and their conversation, as is not unusual at that shadowy hour, turned upon old tales and traditions of a supernatural nature. Being all poor as rats, they dwelt with peculiar fondness upon the popular theme of enchanted riches left by the Moors in various parts of the Alhambra. Above all, they concurred in the belief that

there were great treasures buried deep in the earth under the tower of the seven floors.

These stories made an unusual impression on the mind of honest Peregil, and they sank deeper and deeper into his thoughts as he returned alone down the darkling avenues. "If, after all, there should be treasure hid beneath that tower—and if the scroll I left with the Moor should enable me to get at it!" In the sudden ecstasy of the thought he had well nigh let fall his water-jar.

That night he tumbled and tossed, and could scarcely get a wink of sleep for the thoughts that were bewildering his brain. Bright and early, he repaired to the shop of the Moor, and told him all that was passing in his mind. "You can read Arabic," said he; "suppose we go together to the tower, and try the effect of the charm; if it fails we are no worse off than before, but if it succeeds we will share equally all the treasure we may discover."

“ Hold,” replied the Moslem ; “ this writing is not sufficient of itself ; it must be read at midnight, by the light of a taper singularly compounded and prepared, the ingredients of which are not within my reach. Without such taper the scroll is of no avail.”

“ Say no more !” cried the little Gallego, “ I have such a taper at hand, and will bring it here in a moment.” So saying, he hastened home, and soon returned with the end of yellow wax taper that he had found in the box of sandal wood.

The Moor felt it and smelt to it. “ Here are rare and costly perfumes,” said he, “ combined with this yellow wax. This is the kind of taper specified in the scroll. While this burns, the strongest walls and most secret caverns will remain open. Woe to him, however, who lingers within until it be extinguished. He will remain enchanted with the treasure.”

It was now agreed between them to try the

charm that very night. At a late hour, therefore, when nothing was stirring but bats and owls, they ascended the woody hill of the Alhambra, and approached that awful tower, shrouded by trees and rendered formidable by so many traditional tales. By the light of a lanthorn, they groped their way through bushes, and over fallen stones, to the door of a vault beneath the tower. With fear and trembling they descended a flight of steps cut into the rock. It led to an empty chamber damp and drear, from which another flight of steps led to a deeper vault. In this way they descended four several flights, leading into as many vaults one below the other, but the floor of the fourth was solid; and though, according to tradition, there remained three vaults still below, it was said to be impossible to penetrate further, the residue being shut up by strong enchantment. The air of this vault was damp and chilly, and had an earthy smell, and the light scarce cast forth any rays.

They paused here for a time in breathless suspense, until they faintly heard the clock of the watch-tower strike midnight ; upon this they lit the waxen taper, which diffused an odour of myrrh and frankincense and storax.

The Moor began to read in a hurried voice. He had scarce finished when there was a noise as of subterraneous thunder. The earth shook, and the floor yawning open, disclosed a flight of steps. Trembling with awe they descended, and by the light of the lanthorn found themselves in another vault, covered with Arabic inscriptions. In the centre stood a great chest, secured with seven bands of steel, at each end of which sat an enchanted Moor in armour, but motionless as a statue, being controlled by the power of the incantation. Before the chest were several jars filled with gold and silver and precious stones. In the largest of these they thrust their arms up to the elbow, and at every dip hauled forth handfuls of broad yellow pieces

of Moorish gold, or bracelets and ornaments of the same precious metal, while occasionally a necklace of oriental pearl would stick to their fingers. Still they trembled and breathed short while cramming their pockets with the spoils; and cast many a fearful glance at the two enchanted Moors, who sat grim and motionless, glaring upon them with unwinking eyes. At length, struck with a sudden panic at some fancied noise, they both rushed up the staircase tumbled over one another, into the upper apartment, overturned and extinguished the waxen taper, and the pavement again closed with a thundering sound.

Filled with dismay, they did not pause until they had groped their way out of the tower, and beheld the stars shining through the trees. Then seating themselves upon the grass, they divided the spoil, determining to content themselves for the present with this mere skimming of the jars, but to return on some future night

and drain them to the bottom. To make sure of each other's good faith, also, they divided the talismans between them, one retaining the scroll and the other the taper ; this done, they set off with light hearts and well-lined pockets for Granada.

As they wended their way down the hill, the shrewd Moor whispered a word of counsel in the ear of the simple little water carrier.

"Friend Peregil," said he, "all this affair must be kept a profound secret until we have secured the treasure and conveyed it out of harm's way. If a whisper of it gets to the ear of the alcalde we are undone!"

"Certainly," replied the Gallego, "nothing can be more true."

"Friend Peregil," said the Moor, "you are a discreet man, and I make no doubt can keep a secret : but you have a wife."

"She shall not know a word of it," replied the little water carrier sturdily.

“ Enough,” said the Moor, “ I depend upon thy discretion and thy promise.”

Never was promise more positive and sincere ; but, alas ! what man can keep a secret from his wife ? Certainly not such a one as Peregil the water carrier, who was one of the most loving and tractable of husbands. On his return home, he found his wife moping in a corner. “ Mighty well,” cried she as he entered, “ you’ve come at last ; after rambling about until this hour of the night. I wonder you have not brought home another Moor as a house-mate.” Then bursting into tears, she began to wring her hands and smite her breast : “ Unhappy woman that I am !” exclaimed she, “ what will become of me ? My house stripped and plundered by lawyers and alguazils ; my husband a do-no-good, that no longer brings home bread for his family, but goes rambling about day and night, with infidel Moors ! O my children ! my children ! what will become of us ? we shall all have to beg in the streets !”

Honest Peregil was so moved by the distress of his spouse, that he could not help whimpering also. His heart was as full as his pocket, and not to be restrained. Thrusting his hand into the latter he hauled forth three or four broad gold peices, and slipped them into her bosom. The poor woman stared with astonishment, and could not understand the meaning of this golden shower. Before she could recover her surprise, the little Gallego drew forth a chain of gold and dangled it before her, capering with exultation, his mouth distended from ear to ear.

“Holy Virgin protect us!” exclaimed the wife. “What hast thou been doing, Peregil? surely thou hast not been committing murder and robbery!”

The idea scarce entered the brain of the poor woman, than it became a certainty with her. She saw a prison and a gallows in the distance, and a little bandy-legged Gallego hanging pendant from it; and, overcome by the horrors con-

jured up by her imagination, fell into violent hysterics.

What could the poor man do? He had no other means of pacifying his wife and dispelling the phantoms of her fancy, than by relating the whole story of his good fortune. This, however, he did not do until he had exacted from her the most solemn promise to keep it a profound secret from every living being.

To describe her joy would be impossible. She flung her arms round the neck of her husband, and almost strangled him with her caresses. "Now, wife," exclaimed the little man with honest exultation, "what say you now to the Moor's legacy? Henceforth never abuse me for helping a fellow creature in distress."

The honest Gallego retired to his sheep-skin mat, and slept as soundly as if on a bed of down. Not so his wife; she emptied the whole contents of his pockets upon the mat, and sat all night counting gold pieces of Arabic coin, trying on

necklaces and earrings, and fancying the figure she should one day make when permitted to enjoy her riches.

On the following morning the honest Gallego took a broad golden coin, and repaired with it to a jeweller's shop in the Zacatin to offer it for sale, pretending to have found it among the ruins of the Alhambra. The jeweller saw that it had an Arabic inscription, and was of the purest gold ; he offered, however, but a third of its value, with which the water carrier was perfectly content. Peregil now bought new clothes for his little flock, and all kinds of toys, together with ample provisions for a hearty meal, and returning to his dwelling, set all his children dancing around him, while he capered in the midst, the happiest of fathers.

The wife of the water carrier kept her promise of secrecy with surprising strictness. For a whole day and a half she went about with a look of mystery and a heart swelling almost to

bursting, yet she held her peace, though surrounded by her gossips. It is true, she could not help giving herself a few airs, apologized for her ragged dress, and talked of ordering a new basquina all trimmed with gold lace and bugles, and a new lace mantilla. She threw out hints of her husband's intention of leaving off his trade of water carrying, as it did not altogether agree with his health. In fact she thought they should all retire to the country for the summer, that the children might have the benefit of the mountain air, for there was no living in the city in this sultry season.

The neighbours stared at each other, and thought the poor woman had lost her wits; and her airs and graces and elegant pretensions were the theme of universal scoffing and merriment among her friends, the moment her back was turned.

If she restrained herself abroad, however, she indemnified herself at home, and putting a

string of rich oriental pearls round her neck, Moorish bracelets on her arms, and an aigrette of diamonds on her head, sailed backwards and forwards in her slattern rags about the room, now and then stopping to admire herself in a piece of broken mirror. Nay, in the impulse of her simple vanity, she could not resist, on one occasion, showing herself at the window to enjoy the effect of her finery on the passers by.

As the fates would have it, Pedrillo Pedrugo, the meddlesome barber, was at this moment sitting idly in his shop on the opposite side of the street, when his ever-watchful eye caught the sparkle of a diamond. In an instant he was at his loop-hole reconnoitring the slattern spouse of the water carrier, decorated with the splendor of an eastern bride. No sooner had he taken an accurate inventory of her ornaments, than he posted off with all speed to the alcalde. In a little while the hungry alguazil was again on the

scent, and before the day was over the unfortunate Peregil was again dragged into the presence of the judge.

“How is this, villain!” cried the alcalde in a furious voice. “You told me that the infidel who died in your house left nothing behind but an empty coffer, and now I hear of your wife flaunting in her rags decked out with pearls, and diamonds. Wretch that thou art! prepare to render up the spoils of thy miserable victim, and to swing on the gallows that is already tired of waiting for thee.”

The terrified water carrier fell on his knees and made a full relation of the marvellous manner in which he had gained his wealth. The alcalde, the alguazil, and the inquisitive barber, listened with greedy ears to this Arabian tale of enchanted treasure. The alguazil was dispatched to bring the Moor who had assisted in the incantation. The Moslem entered half frightened out of his wits at finding himself in the

hands of the harpies of the law. When he beheld the water carrier standing with sheepish looks and downcast countenance, he comprehended the whole matter. "Miserable animal," said he, as he passed near him, "did I not warn thee against babbling to thy wife?"

The story of the Moor coincided exactly with that of his colleague; but the alcalde affected to be slow of belief, and threw out menaces of imprisonment and rigorous investigation.

"Softly, good Señor Alcalde," said the Musulman, who by this time had recovered his usual shrewdness and self-possession. "Let us not mar Fortune's favours in the scramble for them. Nobody knows any thing of this matter but ourselves—let us keep the secret. There is wealth enough in the cave to enrich us all. Promise a fair division, and all shall be produced—refuse, and the cave shall remain for ever closed."

The alcalde consulted apart with the al-

gunzil. The latter was an old fox in his profession. "Promise anything," said he, "until you get possession of the treasure. You may then seize upon the whole, and if he and his accomplice dare to murmur, threaten them with the faggot and the stake as infidels and sorcerers."

The alcalde relished the advice. Smoothing his brow and turning to the Moor, "This is a strange story," said he, "and may be true, but I must have ocular proof of it. This very night you must repeat the incantation in my presence. If there be really such treasure, we will share it amicably between us, and say nothing further of the matter; if ye have deceived me, expect no mercy at my hands. In the mean time you must remain in custody."

The Moor and the water carrier cheerfully agreed to these conditions, satisfied that the event would prove the truth of their words.

Towards midnight the alcalde sallied forth

secretly, attended by the alguazil and the meddlesome barber, all strongly armed. They conducted the Moor and the water carrier as prisoners, and were provided with the stout donkey of the latter to bear off the expected treasure. They arrived at the tower without being observed, and tying the donkey to a fig tree, descended into the fourth vault of the tower.

The scroll was produced, the yellow waxen taper lighted, and the Moor read the form of incantation. The earth trembled as before, and the pavement opened with a thundering sound, disclosing the narrow flight of steps. The alcalde, the alguazil, and the barber were struck aghast, and could not summon courage to descend. The Moor and the water carrier entered the lower vault, and found the two Moors seated as before, silent and motionless. They removed two of the great jars, filled with golden coin and precious stones. The water carrier bore them up one by one upon his shoulders, but though a

strong-backed little man, and accustomed to carry burdens, he staggered beneath their weight, and found, when slung on each side of his donkey, they were as much as the animal could bear.

“ Let us be content for the present,” said the Moor, “ here is as much treasure as we can carry off without being perceived, and enough to make us all wealthy to our heart’s desire.”

“ Is there more treasure remaining behind ? ” demanded the alcalde.

“ The greatest prize of all,” said the Moor, “ a huge coffer bound with bands of steel, and filled with pearls and precious stones.”

“ Let us have up the coffer by all means,” cried the grasping alcalde.

“ I will descend for no more,” said the Moor doggedly ; “ enough is enough for a reasonable man—more is superfluous.”

“ And I,” said the water carrier, “ will bring up no further burden to break the back of my poor donkey.”

Finding commands, threats, and entreaties equally vain, the alcalde turned to his two adherents. "Aid me," said he, "to bring up the coffer, and its contents shall be divided between us." So saying he descended the steps, followed with trembling reluctance by the alguazil and the barber.

No sooner did the Moor behold them fairly earthed than he extinguished the yellow taper; the pavement closed with its usual crash, and the three worthies remained buried in its womb.

He then hastened up the different flights of steps, nor stopped until in the open air. The little water carrier followed him as fast as his short legs would permit.

"What hast thou done?" cried Peregil, as soon as he could recover breath. "The alcalde and the other two are shut up in the vault."

"It is the will of Allah!" said the Moor devoutly.

"And will you not release them?" demanded the Gallego.

“ Allah forbid ! ” replied the Moor smoothing his beard. “ It is written in the book of fate that they shall remain enchanted until some future adventurer arrive to break the charm. The will of God be done ! ” so saying, he hurled the end of the waxen taper far among the gloomy thickets of the glen.

There was now no remedy, so the Moor and the water carrier proceeded with the richly laden donkey toward the city, nor could honest Peregil refrain from hugging and kissing his long-eared fellow labourer, thus restored to him from the clutches of the law ; and in fact, it is doubtful which gave the simple-hearted little man most joy at the moment, the gaining of the treasure, or the recovery of the donkey.

The two partners in good luck divided their spoil amicably and fairly, except that the Moor, who had a little taste for trinketry, made out to get into his heap the most of the pearls and precious stones and other baubles, but then he al-

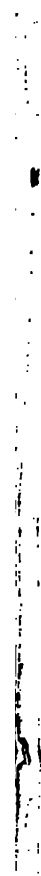
ways gave the water carrier in lieu magnificent jewels of massy gold, of five times the size, with which the latter was heartily content. They took care not to linger within reach of accidents, but made off to enjoy their wealth undisturbed in other countries. The Moor returned to Africa, to his native city of Tetuan, and the Gallego with his wife, his children and his donkey, made the best of his way to Portugal. Here, under the admonition and tuition of his wife, he became a personage of some consequence, for she made the worthy little man array his long body and short legs in doublet and hose, with a feather in his hat and a sword by his side, and laying aside his familiar appellation of Peregil, assumed the more sonorous title of Don Pedro Gil : his progeny grew up a thriving and merry-hearted, though short and bandy-legged generation, while Señora Gil, befringed, belaced and betasselled from her head to her heels, with glittering rings on every finger, became a model of slattern fashion and finery.

As to the alcalde and his adjuncts, they remained shut up under the great tower of the seven floors, and there they remain spell-bound at the present day. Whenever there shall be a lack in Spain of pimping barbers, sharking alguazils, and corrupt alcaldes, they may be sought after ; but if they have to wait until such time for their deliverance, there is danger of their enchantment enduring until doomsday

THE LEGEND
OF
THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA :
OR,
THE PAGE AND THE GER FALCON.

VOL. II.

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LEGEND
OF
THE ROSE OF THE ALHAMBRA,
&c.

For some time after the surrender of Granada by the Moors that delightful city was a frequent and favourite residence of the Spanish sovereigns, until they were frightened away by successive shocks of earthquakes, which toppled down various houses, and made the old Moslem towers rock to their foundation.

Many many years then rolled away during which Granada was rarely honoured by a royal

guest. The palaces of the nobility remained silent and shut up; and the Alhambra, like a slighted beauty, sat in mournful desolation, among her neglected gardens. The tower of the Infantas, once the residence of the three beautiful Moorish princesses, partook of the general desolation, and the spider spun her web athwart the gilded vault, and bats and owls nestled in those chambers that had been graced by the presence of Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda. The neglect of this tower may partly have been owing to some superstitious notions of the neighbours. It was rumoured that the spirit of the youthful Zorahayda, who had perished in that tower, was often seen by moonlight seated beside the fountain in the hall, or moaning about the battlements, and that the notes of her silver lute would be heard at midnight by wayfarers passing along the glen.

At length the city of Granada was once more welcomed by the royal presence. All the world

knows that Philip V. was the first Bourbon that swayed the Spanish sceptre. All the world knows that he married, in second nuptials, Elizabethta or Isabella (for they are the same) the beautiful princess of Parma ; and all the world knows that by this chain of contingencies a French prince and an Italian princess were seated together on the Spanish throne. For the reception of this illustrious pair the Alhambra was repaired and fitted up with all possible expedition. The arrival of the court changed the whole aspect of the lately deserted palace. The clangour of drum and trumpet, the tramp of steed about the avenues and outer court, the glitter of arms and display of banners about barbican and battlement, recalled the ancient and warlike glories of the fortress. A softer spirit however reigned within the royal palace. There was the rustling of robes and the cautious tread and murmuring voice of reverential courtiers about the antichambers ; a loitering of pages and maids of honour

about the gardens, and the sound of music stealing from open casements.

Among those who attended in the train of the monarchs was a favourite page of the queen, named Ruyz de Alarcon. To say that he was a favourite page of the queen was at once to speak his eulogium, for every one in the suite of the stately Elizabetta was chosen for grace, and beauty, and accomplishments. He was just turned of eighteen, light and lithe of form, and graceful as a young Antinous. To the queen he was all deference and respect, yet he was at heart a roguish stripling, petted and spoiled by the ladies about the court, and experienced in the ways of women far beyond his years.

This loitering page was one morning rambling about the groves of the Generalife, which overlook the grounds of the Alhambra. He had taken with him for his amusement a favourite ger-falcon of the queen. In the course of his rambles seeing a bird rising from a thicket, he

unhooded the hawk and let him fly. The falcon towered high in the air, made a swoop at his quarry, but missing it, soared away regardless of the calls of the page. The latter followed the truant bird with his eye, in its capricious flight, until he saw it alight upon the battlements of a remote and lonely tower, in the outer wall of the Alhambra, built on the edge of a ravine that separated the royal fortress from the grounds of the Generalife. It was in fact the "Tower of the Princesses."

The page descended into the ravine and approached the tower, but it had no entrance from the glen, and its lofty height rendered any attempt to scale it fruitless. Seeking one of the gates of the fortress, therefore, he made a wide circuit to that side of the tower facing within the walls.

A small garden enclosed by a trellis-work of reeds overhung with myrtle, lay before the tower. Opening a wicket the page passed between beds

of flowers and thickets of roses to the door. It was closed and bolted. A crevice in the door gave him a peep into the interior. There was a small Moorish hall with fretted walls, light marble columns, and an alabaster fountain surrounded with flowers. In the centre hung a gilt cage containing a singing bird, beneath it, on a chair, lay a tortoiseshell cat among reels of silk and other articles of female labour, and a guitar decorated with ribbons leaned against the fountain.

Ruyz de Alarcon was struck with these traces of female taste and elegance in a lonely, and, as he had supposed, deserted tower. They reminded him of the tales of enchanted halls current in the Alhambra; and the tortoiseshell cat might be some spell-bound princess.

He knocked gently at the door. A beautiful face peeped out from a little window above, but was instantly withdrawn. He waited expecting that the door would be opened, but he waited in vain; no footstep was to be heard within—all was

silent. Had his senses deceived him, or was this beautiful apparition the fairy of the tower? He knocked again, and more loudly. After a little while the beaming face once more peeped forth; it was that of a blooming damsel of fifteen.

The page immediately doffed his plumed bonnet, and entreated in the most courteous accents to be permitted to ascend the tower in pursuit of his falcon.

"I dare not open the door, Señor," replied the little damsel blushing, "my aunt has forbidden it."

"I do beseech you, fair maid—it is the favourite falcon of the queen: I dare not return to the palace without it."

"Are you then one of the cavaliers of the court?"

"I am, fair maid; but I shall lose the queen's favour and my place, if I lose this hawk."

"Santa Maria! It is against you cavaliers of

the court my aunt has charged me especially to bar the door."

"Against wicked cavaliers doubtless, but I am none of these, but a simple harmless page, who will be ruined and undone if you deny me this small request."

The heart of the little damsel was touched by the distress of the page. It was a thousand pities he should be ruined for the want of so trifling a boon. Surely too he could not be one of those dangerous beings whom her aunt had described as a species of cannibal, ever on the prowl to make prey of thoughtless damsels; he was gentle and modest, and stood so entreatingly with cap in hand, and looked so charming.

The sly page saw that the garrison began to waver, and redoubled his entreaties in such moving terms that it was not in the nature of mortal maiden to deny him; so the blushing little warden of the tower descended and opened the door with a trembling hand, and if

the page had been charmed by a mere glimpse of her countenance from the window, he was ravished by the full length portrait now revealed to him.

Her Andalusian bodice and trim basquiña set off the round but delicate symmetry of her form, which was as yet scarce verging into womanhood. Her glossy hair was parted on her forehead, with scrupulous exactness, and decorated with a fresh plucked rose, according to the universal custom of the country. It is true her complexion was tinged by the ardour of a southern sun, but it served to give richness to the mantling bloom of her cheek, and to heighten the lustre of her melting eyes.

Ruyz de Alarcon beheld all this with a single glance, for it became him not to tarry; he merely murmured his acknowledgements, and then bounded lightly up the spiral staircase in quest of his falcon.

He soon returned with the truant bird upon

his fist. The damsel, in the mean time, had seated herself by the fountain in the hall, and was winding silk ; but in her agitation she let fall the reel upon the pavement. The page sprang and picked it up, then dropping gracefully on one knee, presented it to her ; but, seizing the hand extended to receive it, imprinted on it a kiss more fervent and devout than he had ever imprinted on the fair hand of his sovereign.

“ Ave Maria, Señor ! ” exclaimed the damsel, blushing still deeper with confusion and surprise, for never before had she received such a salutation.

The modest page made a thousand apologies, assuring her it was the way, at court, of expressing the most profound homage and respect.

Her anger, if anger she felt, was easily pacified, but her agitation and embarrassment continued, and she sat blushing deeper and deeper, with her eyes cast down upon her work, entangling the silk which she attempted to wind.

The cunning page saw the confusion in the opposite camp, and would fain have profited by it, but the fine speeches he would have uttered died upon his lips, his attempts at gallantry were awkward and ineffectual, and to his surprise, the adroit page, who had figured with such grace and effrontery among the most knowing and experienced ladies of the court, found himself awed and abashed in the presence of a simple damsel of fifteen.

In fact, the artless maiden, in her own modesty and innocence, had guardians more effectual than the bolts and bars prescribed by her vigilant aunt. Still, where is the female bosom proof against the first whisperings of love? The little damsel, with all her artlessness, instinctively comprehended all that the faltering tongue of the page failed to express, and her heart was fluttered at beholding, for the first time, a lover at her feet—and such a lover!

The diffidence of the page, though genuine,

was short-lived, and he was recovering his usual ease and confidence, when a shrill voice was heard at a distance.

“ My aunt is returning from mass !” cried the damsel in affright : “ I pray you, Señor, depart.”

“ Not until you grant me that rose from your hair as a remembrance.”

She hastily untwisted the rose from her raven locks. “ Take it,” cried she, agitated and blushing, “ but pray begone.”

The page took the rose, and at the same time covered with kisses the fair hand that gave it. Then, placing the flower in his bonnet, and taking the falcon upon his fist, he bounded off through the garden, bearing away with him the heart of the gentle Jacinta.

When the vigilant aunt arrived at the tower, she remarked the agitation of her niece, and an air of confusion in the hall ; but a word of explanation sufficed. “ A ger-falcon had pursued his prey into the hall.”

“Mercy on us! to think of a falcon flying into the tower. Did ever one hear of so saucy a hawk? Why, the very bird in the cage is not safe!”

The vigilant Fredegonda was one of the most wary of ancient spinsters. She had a becoming terror and distrust of what she denominated “the opposite sex,” which had gradually increased through a long life of celibacy. Not that the good lady had ever suffered from their wiles, nature having set up a safeguard in her face that forbade all trespass upon her premises; but ladies who have least cause to fear for themselves, are most ready to keep a watch over their more tempting neighbours.

The niece was the orphan of an officer who had fallen in the wars. She had been educated in a convent, and had recently been transferred from her sacred asylum to the immediate guardianship of her aunt, under whose overshadowing care she vegetated in obscurity, like an opening rose blooming beneath a briar. Nor

indeed is this comparison entirely accidental; for, to tell the truth, her fresh and dawning beauty had caught the public eye, even in her seclusion, and, with that poetical turn common to the people of Andalusia, the peasantry of the neighbourhood had given her the appellation of 'the Rose of the Alhambra.'

The wary aunt continued to keep a faithful watch over her tempting little niece as long as the court continued at Granada, and flattered herself that her vigilance had been successful. It is true, the good lady was now and then discomposed by the tinkling of guitars and chanting of low ditties from the moonlit groves beneath the tower; but she would exhort her niece to shut her ears against such idle minstrelsy, assuring her it that it was one of the arts of the opposite sex, by which simple maids were often lured to their undoing. Alas! what chance with a simple maid has a dry lecture against a moonlight serenade?

At length king Philip cut short his sojourn at Granada, and suddenly departed with all his train. The vigilant Fredegonda watched the royal pageant as it issued forth from the gate of Justice, and descended the great avenue leading to the city. When the last banner disappeared from her sight, she returned exulting to her tower, for all her cares were over. To her surprise, a light Arabian steed pawed the ground at the wicket-gate of the garden:—to her horror, she saw through the thickets of roses a youth, in gaily embroidered dress, at the feet of her niece. At the sound of her footsteps he gave a tender adieu, bounded lightly over the barrier of reeds and myrtles, sprang upon his horse, and was out of sight in an instant.

The tender Jacinta, in the agony of her grief, lost all thought of her aunt's displeasure. Throwing herself into her arms, she broke forth into sobs and tears.

“Ay de mi!” cried she; “he’s gone!—he’s

gone!—he's gone! and I shall never see him more!"

"Gone!—who is gone?—what youth is that I saw at your feet?"

"A queen's page, aunt, who came to bid me farewell."

"A queen's page, child!" echoed the vigilant Fredegonda faintly; "and when did you become acquainted with a queen's page?"

"The morning that the ger-falcon came into the tower. It was the queen's ger-falcon, and he came in pursuit of it."

"Ah silly, silly girl! know that there are no ger-falcons half so dangerous as these young pranking pages, and it is precisely such simple birds as thee that they pounce upon."

The aunt was at first indignant at learning that, in despite of her boasted vigilance, a tender intercourse had been carried on by the youthful lovers, almost beneath her eye; but when she found that her simple-hearted niece, though

thus exposed, without the protection of bolt or bar, to all the machinations of the opposite sex, had come forth unsinged from the fiery ordeal, she consoled herself with the persuasion that it was owing to the chaste and cautious maxims in which she had, as it were, steeped her to the very lips.

While the aunt laid this soothing unction to her pride, the niece treasured up the oft-repeated vows of fidelity of the page. But what is the love of restless, roving man? A vagrant stream that dallies for a time with each flower upon its bank, then passes on, and leaves them all in tears.

Days, weeks, months elapsed, and nothing more was heard of the page. The pomegranate ripened, the vine yielded up its fruit, the autumnal rains descended in torrents from the mountains; the Sierra Nevada became covered with a snowy mantle, and wintry blasts howled through the halls of the Alhambra—still he came

not. The winter passed away. Again the genial spring burst forth with song and blossom and balmy zephyr; the snows melted from the mountains, until none remained but on the lofty summit of Nevada, glistening through the sultry summer air. Still nothing was heard of the forgetful page.

In the mean time, the poor little Jacinta grew pale and thoughtful. Her former occupations and amusements were abandoned, her silk lay entangled, her guitar unstrung, her flowers were neglected, the notes of her bird unheeded, and her eyes, once so bright, were dimmed with secret weeping. If any solitude could be devised to foster the passion of a love-lorn damsel, it would be such a place as the Alhambra, where every thing seems disposed to produce tender and romantic reveries. It is a very paradise for lovers: how hard then to be alone in such a paradise—and not merely alone, but forsaken!

“Alas, silly child!” would the staid and im-

maculate Fredegonda say, when she found her niece in one of her desponding moods—"did I not warn thee against the wiles and deceptions of these men? What couldst thou expect, too, from one of a haughty and aspiring family—thou an orphan, the descendant of a fallen and impoverished line? Be assured, if the youth were true, his father, who is one of the proudest nobles about the court, would prohibit his union with one so humble and portionless as thou. Pluck up thy resolution, therefore, and drive these idle notions from thy mind."

The words of the immaculate Fredegonda only served to increase the melancholy of her niece, but she sought to indulge it in private. At a late hour one midsummer night, after her aunt had retired to rest, she remained alone in the hall of the tower, seated beside the alabaster fountain. It was here that the faithless page had first knelt and kissed her hand; it was here that he had often vowed eternal fidelity. The

poor little damsel's heart was overladen with sad and tender recollections, her tears began to flow, and slowly fell drop by drop into the fountain. By degrees the crystal water became agitated, and—bubble—bubble—bubble—boiled up and was tossed about, until a female figure, richly clad in Moorish robes, slowly rose to view.

Jacinta was so frightened that she fled from the hall, and did not venture to return. The next morning she related what she had seen to her aunt, but the good lady treated it as a phantasy of her troubled mind, or supposed she had fallen asleep and dreamt beside the fountain. "Thou hast been thinking of the story of the three Moorish princesses that once inhabited this tower," continued she, "and it has entered into thy dreams."

"What story, aunt? I know nothing of it."

"Thou hast certainly heard of the three princesses, Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda, who were confined in this tower by the king their

father, and agreed to fly with three Christian cavaliers. The two first accomplished their escape, but the third failed in her resolution, and it is said, died in this tower."

"I now recollect to have heard of it," said Jacinta, "and to have wept over the fate of the gentle Zorahayda."

"Thou mayest well weep over her fate," continued the aunt, "for the lover of Zorahayda was thy ancestor. He long bemoaned his Moorish love, but time cured him of his grief, and he married a Spanish lady, from whom thou art descended."

Jacinta ruminated upon these words. "That what I have seen is no phantasy of the brain," said she to herself, "I am confident. If indeed it be the spirit of the gentle Zorahayda, which I have heard lingers about this tower, of what should I be afraid? I'll watch by the fountain to-night—perhaps the visit will be repeated."

Towards midnight, when every thing was

quiet, she again took her seat in the hall. As the bell in the distant watch-tower of the Alhambra struck the midnight hour, the fountain was again agitated ; and bubble—bubble—bubble—it tossed about the waters until the Moorish female again rose to view. She was young and beautiful ; her dress was rich with jewels, and in her hand she held a silver lute. Jacinta trembled and was faint, but was reassured by the soft and plaintive voice of the apparition, and the sweet expression of her pale, melancholy countenance.

“ Daughter of mortality,” said she, “ what aileth thee ? Why do thy tears trouble my fountain, and thy sighs and plaints disturb the quiet watches of the night ? ”

“ I weep because of the faithlessness of man, and I bemoan my solitary and forsaken state.”

“ Take comfort ; thy sorrows may yet have an end. Thou beholdest a Moorish princess, who, like thee, was unhappy in her love. A

Christian knight, thy ancestor, won my heart, and would have borne me to his native land and to the bosom of his church. I was a convert in my heart, but I lacked courage equal to my faith, and lingered till too late. For this the evil genii are permitted to have power over me, and I remain enchanted in this tower until some pure Christian will deign to break the magic spell. Wilt thou undertake the task?"

"I will," replied the damsel trembling.

"Come hither then, and fear not; dip thy hand in the fountain, sprinkle the water over me, and baptize me after the manner of thy faith; so shall the enchantment be dispelled, and my troubled spirit have repose."

The damsel advanced with faltering steps, dipped her hand in the fountain, collected water in the palm, and sprinkled it over the pale face of the phantom.

The latter smiled with ineffable benignity. She dropped her silver lute at the feet of Jacinta,

crossed her white arms upon her bosom and melted from sight, so that it seemed merely as if a shower of dew drops had fallen into the fountain.

Jacinta retired from the hall filled with awe and wonder. She scarcely closed her eyes that night, but when she awoke at day-break out of a troubled slumber, the whole appeared to her like a distempered dream. On descending into the hall, however, the truth of the vision was established, for, beside the fountain, she beheld the silver lute glittering in the morning sunshine.

She hastened to her aunt, to relate all that had befallen her, and called her to behold the lute as a testimonial of the reality of her story. If the good lady had any lingering doubts, they were removed when Jacinta touched the instrument, for she drew forth such ravishing tones as to thaw even the frigid bosom of the immaculate Fredegonda, that region of

eternal winter, into a genial flow. Nothing but supernatural melody could have produced such an effect.

The extraordinary power of the lute became every day more and more apparent. The wayfarer passing by the tower was detained, and, as it were, spell bound, in breathless ecstasy. The very birds gathered in the neighbouring trees, and, hushing their own strains, listened in charmed silence.

Rumour soon spread the news abroad. The inhabitants of Granada thronged to the Alhambra to catch a few notes of the transcendent music that floated about the tower of Las Infantas.

The lovely little minstrel was at length drawn forth from her retreat. The rich and powerful of the land contended who should entertain and do honour to her; or rather, who should secure the charms of her lute to draw fashionable throngs to their saloons. Wherever she went her vigilant aunt kept a dragon watch at

her elbow, awing the throngs of impassioned admirers, who hung in raptures on her strains. The report of her wonderful powers spread from city to city. Malaga, Seville, Cordova, all became successively mad on the theme; nothing was talked off throughout Andalusia but the beautiful minstrel of the Alhambra. How could it be otherwise among a people so musical and gallant as the Andalusians, when the lute was magical in its powers, and the minstrel inspired by love?

While all Andalusia was thus music mad, a different mood prevailed at the court of Spain. Philip V., as is well known, was a miserable hypochondriac, and subject to all kinds of fancies. Sometimes he would keep to his bed for weeks together, groaning under imaginary complaints. At other times he would insist upon abdicating his throne, to the great annoyance of his royal spouse, who had a strong relish for the splendours of a court and the glories of a crown,

and guided the sceptre of her imbecile lord with an expert and steady hand.

Nothing was found to be so efficacious in dispelling the royal megrims as the powers of music; the queen took care, therefore, to have the best performers, both vocal and instrumental, at hand, and retained the famous Italian singer Farinelli about the court as a kind of royal physician.

At the moment we treat of, however, a freak had come over the mind of this sapient and illustrious Bourbon that surpassed all former vagaries. After a long spell of imaginary illness, which set all the strains of Farinelli, and the consultations of a whole orchestra of court fiddlers at defiance, the monarch fairly, in idea, gave up the ghost, and considered himself absolutely dead.

This would have been harmless enough, and even convenient both to his queen and courtiers, had he been content to remain in the quietude

befitting a dead man ; but to their annoyance he insisted upon having the funeral ceremonies performed over him, and, to their inexpressible perplexity, began to grow impatient and to revile bitterly at them for negligence and disrespect, in leaving him unburied. What was to be done? To disobey the king's positive commands was monstrous in the eyes of the obsequious courtiers of a punctilious court—but to obey him and bury him alive, would be downright regicide!

In the midst of this fearful dilemma a rumour reached the court, of the female minstrel who was turning the brains of all Andalusia. The queen dispatched missions in all haste to summon her to St. Ildefonso, where the court at that time resided.

Within a few days, as the queen with her maids of honour was walking in those stately gardens intended, with their avenues and terraces and fountains, to eclipse the glories of Versailles,

the far-famed minstrel was conducted into her presence. The imperial Elizabetta gazed with surprise at the youthful and unpretending appearance of the little being that had set the world madding. She was in her picturesque Andalusian dress, her silver lute was in her hand, and she stood with modest and downcast eyes, but with a simplicity and freshness of beauty that still bespoke her "the Rose of the Alhambra."

As usual she was accompanied by the ever vigilant Fredegonda, who gave the whole history of her parentage and descent to the inquiring queen. If the stately Elizabetta had been interested by the appearance of Jacinta, she was still more pleased when she learnt that she was of a meritorious though impoverished line, and that her father had bravely fallen in the service of the crown. "If thy powers equal their renown" said she, "and thou canst cast forth this evil spirit that possesses thy sovereign, thy for-

tunes shall henceforth be my care, and honours and wealth attend thee."

Impatient to make trial of her skill, she led the way at once to the apartment of the moody monarch.

Jacinta followed with downcast eyes through files of guards and crowds of courtiers. They arrived at length at a great chamber hung with black. The windows were closed to exclude the light of day: a number of yellow wax tapers in silver sconces diffused a lugubrious light, and dimly revealed the figures of mutes in mourning dresses, and courtiers who glided about with noiseless step and woe-begone visage. On the midst of a funeral bed or bier, his hands folded on his breast, and the tip of his nose just visible, lay extended this would-be-buried monarch.

The queen entered the chamber in silence, and pointing to a footstool in an obscure corner, beckoned to Jacinta to sit down and commence.

At first she touched her lute with a faltering hand, but gathering confidence and animation as she proceeded, drew forth such soft aerial harmony, that all present could scarce believe it mortal. As to the monarch, who had already considered himself in the world of spirits, he set it down for some angelic melody or the music of the spheres. By degrees the theme was varied, and the voice of the minstrel accompanied the instrument. She poured forth one of the legendary ballads treating of the ancient glories of the Alhambra and the achievements of the Moors. Her whole soul entered into the theme, for with the recollections of the Alhambra was associated the story of her love. The funeral chamber resounded with the animating strain. It entered into the gloomy heart of the monarch. He raised his head and gazed around : he sat up on his couch, his eye began to kindle—at length, leaping upon the floor, he called for sword and buckler.

The triumph of music, or rather of the enchanted lute was complete; the demon of melancholy was cast forth; and, as it were, a dead man brought to life. The windows of the apartment were thrown open; the glorious effulgence of Spanish sunshine burst into the late lugubrious chamber; all eyes sought the lovely enchantress, but the lute had fallen from her hand, she had sunk upon the earth, and the next moment was clasped to the bosom of Ruyz de Alarcon.

The nuptials of the happy couple were shortly after celebrated with great splendour; but hold—I hear the reader ask, how did Ruyz de Alarcon account for his long neglect? O that was all owing to the opposition of a proud pragmatical old father: besides, young people, who really like one another, soon come to an amicable understanding, and bury all past grievances when once they meet.

But how was the proud pragmatical old father reconciled to the match?

O his scruples were easily overcome by a word or two from the queen, especially as dignities and rewards were showered upon the blooming favourite of royalty. Besides, the lute of Jacinta, you know, possessed a magic power, and could control the most stubborn head and hardest breast.

And what came of the enchanted lute?

O that is the most curious matter of all, and plainly proves the truth of all this story. That lute remained for some time in the family, but was purloined and carried off, as was supposed, by the great singer Farinelli, in pure jealousy. At his death it passed into other hands in Italy, who were ignorant of its mystic powers, and melting down the silver, transferred the strings to an old cremona fiddle. The strings still retain something of their magic virtues. A word in the reader's ear, but let it go no further—that fiddle is now bewitching the whole world—it is the fiddle of Paganini!

THE VETERAN.

THE
V E T E R A N.

AMONG the curious acquaintances I have made in my rambles about the fortress, is a brave and battered old colonel of Invalids, who is nestled like a hawk in one of the Moorish towers. His history, which he is fond of telling, is a tissue of those adventures, mishaps, and vicissitudes that render the life of almost every Spaniard of note as varied and whimsical as the pages of Gil Blas.

He was in America at twelve years of age, and

reckons among the most signal and fortunate events of his life, his having seen General Washington. Since then he has taken a part in all the wars of his country ; he can speak experimentally of most of the prisons and dungeons of the Peninsula ; has been lamed of one leg, crippled in his hands, and so cut up and carbonadoed that he is a kind of walking monument of the troubles of Spain, on which there is a scar for every battle and broil, as every year was notched upon the tree of Robinson Crusoe. The greatest misfortune of the brave old cavalier, however, appears to have been his having commanded at Malaga during a time of peril and confusion, and been made a general by the inhabitants, to protect them from the invasion of the French. This has entailed upon him a number of just claims upon government, that I fear will employ him until his dying day in writing and printing petitions and memorials, to the great disquiet of his mind, exhaustion of his purse, and penance of his friends ;

not one of whom can visit him without having to listen to a mortal document of half an hour in length, and to carry away half a dozen pamphlets in his pocket. This, however, is the case throughout Spain; every where you meet with some worthy wight brooding in a corner and nursing up some pet grievance and cherished wrong. Beside, a Spaniard who has a law suit, or a claim upon government, may be considered as furnished with employment for the remainder of his life.

I visited the veteran in his quarters in the upper part of the Torre del Vino, or Wine Tower. His room was small but snug, and commanded a beautiful view of the Vega. It was arranged with a soldier's precision. Three muskets and a brace of pistols all bright and shining, were suspended against the wall with a sabre and a cane, hanging side by side, and above them, two cocked hats, one for parade, and one for ordinary use. A small shelf containing some half

dozen books, formed his library, one of which, a little old mouldy volume of philosophical maxims, was his favourite reading. This he thumbed and pondered over day by day ; applying every maxim to his own particular case, provided it had a little tinge of wholesome bitterness, and treated of the injustice of the world.

Yet he is social and kind hearted, and provided he can be diverted from his wrongs and his philosophy, is an entertaining companion. I like these old weather-beaten sons of fortune, and enjoy their rough campaigning anecdotes. In the course of my visit to the one in question, I learnt some curious facts about an old military commander of the fortress, who seems to have resembled him in some respects, and to have had similar fortunes in the wars. These particulars have been augmented by inquiries among some of the old inhabi-

tants of the place, particularly the father of Mateo Ximenes, of whose traditional stories the worthy I am about to introduce to the reader, is a favourite hero.

THE
GOVERNOR AND THE NOTARY.

THE

GOVERNOR AND THE NOTARY.

IN former times there ruled as governor of the Alhambra, a doughty old cavalier, who, from having lost one arm in the wars, was commonly known by the name of el Gobernador Manco, or "the one-armed governor." He in fact prided himself upon being an old soldier, wore his mustachios curled up to his eyes, a pair of campaigning boots, and a toledo as long as a spit, with his pocket handkerchief in the basket hilt.

He was, moreover, exceedingly proud and

punctilious, and tenacious of all his privileges and dignities. Under his sway the immunities of the Alhambra, as a royal residence and domain, were rigidly exacted. No one was permitted to enter the fortress with fire arms, or even with a sword or staff, unless he were of a certain rank ; and every horseman was obliged to dismount at the gate, and lead his horse by the bridle. Now as the hill of the Alhambra rises from the very midst of the city of Granada, being, as it were, an excrescence of the capital, it must at all times be somewhat irksome to the captain general, who commands the province, to have thus an *imperium in imperio*, a pretty independent post in the very centre of his domains. It was rendered the more galling, in the present instance, from the irritable jealousy of the old governor, that took fire on the least question of authority and jurisdiction, and from the loose vagrant character of the people that had gradually nestled themselves within the fortress, as in a sanctuary, and from

thence carried on a system of roguery and depredation at the expense of the honest inhabitants of the city.

Thus there was a perpetual feud and heart-burning between the captain general and the governor, the more virulent on the part of the latter, inasmuch as the smallest of two neighbouring potentates is always the most captious about his dignity. The stately palace of the captain general stood in the Plaza Nueva, immediately at the foot of the hill of the Alhambra, and here was always a bustle and parade of guards and domestics, and city functionaries. A beetling bastion of the fortress overlooked the palace and public square in front of it; and on this bastion the old governor would occasionally strut backwards and forwards, with his toledo girded by his side, keeping a wary eye down upon his rival, like a hawk reconnoitring his quarry from his nest in a dry tree.

Whenever he descended into the city it was

in grand parade, on horseback surrounded by his guards, or in his state coach, an ancient and unwieldy Spanish edifice of carved timber and gilt leather, drawn by eight mules, with running footmen, out-riders and lacquies, on which occasions he flattered himself he impressed every beholder with awe and admiration as vicegerent of the king, though the wits of Granada, particularly those who loitered about the palace of the captain general, were apt to sneer at his petty parade, and in allusion to the vagrant character of his subjects, to greet him with the appellation of "the king of the beggars." One of the most fruitful sources of dispute between these two doughty rivals was the right claimed by the governor to have all things passed free of duty through the city, that were intended for the use of himself or his garrison. By degrees this privilege had given rise to extensive smuggling. A nest of contrabandistas took up their abode in the hovels of the fortress, and the numerous caves

in its vicinity, and drove a thriving business under the connivance of the soldiers of the garrison.

The vigilance of the captain general was aroused. He consulted his legal adviser and factotum, a shrewd meddlesome escribano, or notary, who rejoiced in an opportunity of perplexing the old potentate of the Alhambra, and involving him in a maze of legal subtilities. He advised the captain general to insist upon the right of examining every convoy passing through the gates of his city, and he penned a long letter for him in vindication of the right. Governor Manco was a straightforward cut and thrust old soldier, who hated an escribano worse than the devil, and this one in particular worse than all other escribanos.

“What!” said he, curling up his mustachios fiercely, “does the captain general set his man of the pen to practise confusions upon me? I’ll let him see that an old soldier is not to be baffled by schoolcraft.”

He seized his pen and scrawled a short letter in a crabbed hand, in which, without deigning to enter into argument, he insisted on the right of transit free of search, and denounced vengeance on any custom-house officer who should lay his unhallowed hand on any convoy protected by the flag of the Alhambra. While this question was agitated between the two pragmatical potentates, it so happened that a mule laden with supplies for the fortress arrived one day at the gate of Xenil, by which it was to traverse a suburb of the city on its way to the Alhambra. The convoy was headed by a testy old corporal, who had long served under the governor, and was a man after his own heart ; as rusty and staunch as an old toledo blade. As they approached the gate of the city the corporal placed the banner of the Alhambra on the pack-saddle of the mule, and, drawing himself up to a perfect perpendicular, advanced with his head dressed to the front, but with the wary side glance of a cur passing

through hostile ground, and ready for a snap and a snarl.

“ Who goes there ? ” said the centinel at the gate.

“ Soldier of the Alhambra,” said the corporal, without turning his head.

“ What have you in charge ? ”

“ Provisions for the garrison.”

“ Proceed.”

The corporal marched straight forward, followed by the convoy, but had not advanced many paces before a posse of custom-house officers rushed out of a small toll-house.

“ Hallo there ! ” cried the leader, “ Muleteer, halt, and open those packages.”

The corporal wheeled round, and drew himself up in battle array. “ Respect the flag of the Alhambra,” said he ; “ these things are for the governor.”

“ A figo for the governor, and a figo for his flag. Muleteer, halt, I say.”

“ Stop the convoy at your peril ! ” cried the corporal, cocking his musket ; “ Muleteer, proceed.”

The muleteer gave his beast a hearty thwack ; the custom-house officer sprang forward and seized the halter ; whereupon the corporal levelled his piece and shot him dead.

The street was immediately in an uproar.

The oldcorporal was seized, and after undergoing sundry kicks and cuffs and cudgellings, which are generally given impromptu by the mob in Spain, as a foretaste of the after penalties of the law, he was loaded with irons, and conducted to the city prison ; while his comrades were permitted to proceed with the convoy, after it had been well rummaged, to the Alhambra.

The old governor was in a towering passion when he heard of this insult to his flag and capture of his corporal. For a time he stormed about the Moorish halls, and vapoured about the bastions, and looked down fire and sword

upon the palace of the captain general. Having vented the first ebullition of his wrath, he despatched a message demanding the surrender of the corporal, as to him alone belonged the right of sitting in judgment on the offences of those under his command. The captain general, aided by the pen of the delighted escribano, replied at great length, arguing that as the offence had been committed within the walls of his city, and against one of his civil officers, it was clearly within his proper jurisdiction. The governor rejoined by a repetition of his demand; the captain general gave a sur-rejoinder of still greater length and legal acumen; the governor became hotter and more peremptory in his demands, and the captain general cooler and more copious in his replies; until the old lion-hearted soldier absolutely roared with fury at being thus entangled in the meshes of legal controversy.

While the subtle escribano was thus amusing

himself at the expense of the governor, he was conducting the trial of the corporal, who, mewed up in a narrow dungeon of the prison, had merely a small grated window at which to show his iron-bound visage and receive the consolations of his friends.

A mountain of written testimony was diligently heaped up, according to Spanish form, by the indefatigable escribano; the corporal was completely overwhelmed by it. He was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged.

It was in vain the governor sent down remonstrance and menace from the Alhambra. The fatal day was at hand, and the corporal was put *in capilla*, that is to say, in the chapel of the prison, as is always done with culprits the day before execution, that they may meditate on their approaching end and repent them of their sins.

Seeing things drawing to an extremity, the old governor determined to attend to the affair

in person. For this purpose he ordered out his carriage of state, and, surrounded by his guards, rumbled down the avenue of the Alhambra into the city. Driving to the house of the escribano, he summoned him to the portal.

The eye of the old governor gleamed like a coal at beholding the smirking man of the law advancing with an air of exultation.

“What is this I hear,” cried he, “that you are about to put to death one of my soldiers?”

“All according to law—all in strict form of justice,” said the self-sufficient escribano, chuckling and rubbing his hands. “I can show your excellency the written testimony in the case.”

“Fetch it hither,” said the governor. The escribano bustled into his office, delighted with having another opportunity of displaying his ingenuity at the expense of the hard-headed veteran.

He returned with a satchel full of papers, and

began to read a long deposition with professional volubility. By this time a crowd had collected, listening with outstretched necks and gaping mouths.

“Prythee, man, get into the carriage, out of this pestilent throng, that I may the better hear thee,” said the governor.

The escribano entered the carriage, when, in a twinkling, the door was closed, the coachman smacked his whip—mules, carriage, guards and all dashed off at a thundering rate, leaving the crowd in gaping wonderment; nor did the governor pause until he had lodged his prey in one of the strongest dungeons of the Alhambra.

He then sent down a flag of truce in military style, proposing a cartel or exchange of prisoners—the corporal for the notary. The pride of the captain general was piqued; he returned a contemptuous refusal, and forthwith caused a gallows, tall and strong, to be erected in the centre of the Plaza Nueva for the execution of the corporal.

"Oho! is that the game?" said Governor Manco. He gave orders, and immediately a gibbet was reared on the verge of the great beetling bastion that overlooked the Plaza. "Now," said he in a message to the captain general, "hang my soldier when you please; but at the same time that he is swung off in the square, look up to see your escribano dangling against the sky."

The captain general was inflexible; troops were paraded in the square; the drums beat, the bell tolled. An immense multitude of amateurs had collected to behold the execution. On the other hand, the governor paraded his garrison on the bastion, and tolled the funeral dirge of the notary from the Torre de la Campana, or Tower of the Bell.

The notary's wife pressed through the crowd with a whole progeny of little embryo escribanos at her heels, and throwing herself at the feet of the captain general, implored him not to

sacrifice the life of her husband, and the welfare of herself and her numerous little ones, to a point of pride; "for you know the old governor too well," said she, "to doubt that he will put his threat in execution, if you hang the soldier."

The captain general was overpowered by her tears and lamentations, and the clamours of her callow brood. The corporal was sent up to the Alhambra, under a guard, in his gallows garb, like a hooded friar, but with head erect and a face of iron. The escribano was demanded in exchange, according to the cartel. The once bustling and self-sufficient man of the law was drawn forth from his dungeon more dead than alive. All his flippancy and conceit had evaporated; his hair, it is said, had nearly turned grey with affright, and he had a downcast, dogged look, as if he still felt the halter round his neck.

The old governor stuck his one arm a-kimbo,

and for a moment surveyed him with an iron smile. "Henceforth, my friend," said he, "moderate your zeal in hurrying others to the gallows; be not too certain of your safety, even though you should have the law on your side; and above all, take care how you play off your schoolcraft another time upon an old soldier."

GOVERNOR MANCO

AND

THE SOLDIER.

GOVERNOR MANCO

AND

THE SOLDIER.

WHEN Governor Manco, or 'the one-armed,' kept up a show of military state in the Alhambra, he became nettled at the reproaches continually cast upon his fortress, of being a nestling place of rogues and contrabandistas. On a sudden, the old potentate determined on reform, and setting vigorously to work, ejected whole nests of vagabonds out of the fortress and the gipsey caves with which the surrounding hills are honey-combed. He sent out soldiers, also, to

patrol the avenues and footpaths, with orders to take up all suspicious persons.

One bright summer morning, a patrol, consisting of the testy old corporal who had distinguished himself in the affair of the notary, a trumpeter and two privates, was seated under the garden wall of the Generalife, beside the road which leads down from the mountain of the sun, when they heard the tramp of a horse, and a male voice singing in rough, though not unmusical tones, an old Castilian campaigning song.

Presently they beheld a sturdy, sun-burnt fellow, clad in the ragged garb of a foot soldier, leading a powerful Arabian horse, caparisoned in the ancient Moresco fashion.

Astonished at the sight of a strange soldier descending, steed in hand, from that solitary mountain, the corporal stepped forth and challenged him.

“ Who goes there ? ”

"A friend."

"Who and what are you?"

"A poor soldier just from the wars, with a cracked crown and empty purse for a reward."

By this time they were enabled to view him more narrowly. He had a black patch across his forehead, which, with a grizzled beard, added to a certain dare-devil cast of countenance, while a slight squint threw into the whole an occasional gleam of roguish good humour.

Having answered the questions of the patrol, the soldier seemed to consider himself entitled to make others in return. "May I ask," said he, "what city is that which I see at the foot of the hill?"

"What city!" cried the trumpeter; "come, that's too bad. Here's a fellow lurking about the mountain of the sun, and demands the name of the great city of Granada!"

"Granada! Madre di Dios! can it be possible?"

“Perhaps not!” rejoined the trumpeter; “and perhaps you have no idea that yonder are the towers of the Alhambra.”

“Son of a trumpet,” replied the stranger, “do not trifle with me; if this be indeed the Alhambra, I have some strange matters to reveal to the governor.”

“You will have an opportunity,” said the corporal, “for we mean to take you before him.” By this time the trumpeter had seized the bridle of the steed, the two privates had each secured an arm of the soldier, the corporal put himself in front, gave the word, “Forward—march!” and away they marched for the Alhambra.

The sight of a ragged foot soldier and a fine Arabian horse, brought in captive by the patrol, attracted the attention of all the idlers of the fortress, and of those gossip groupings that generally assemble about wells and fountains at early dawn. The wheel of the cistern paused in its

rotations, and the slip-shod servant-maid stood gaping, with pitcher in hand, as the corporal passed by with his prize. A motley train gradually gathered in the rear of the escort.

Knowing nods and winks and conjectures passed from one to another. "It is a deserter," said one; "A contrabandista," said another; "A bandalero," said a third;—until it was affirmed that a captain of a desperate band of robbers had been captured by the prowess of the corporal and his patrol. "Well, well," said the old crones, one to another, "captain or not, let him get out of the grasp of old Governor Manco if he can, though he is but one-handed."

Governor Manco was seated in one of the inner halls of the Alhambra, taking his morning's cup of chocolate in company with his confessor, a fat Franciscan friar, from the neighbouring convent. A demure, dark-eyed damsel of Malaga, the daughter of his housekeeper, was attending upon him. The world hinted

that the damsel who, with all her demureness, was a sly buxom baggage, had found out a soft spot in the iron heart of the old governor, and held complete control over him. But let that pass—the domestic affairs of these mighty potentates of the earth should not be too narrowly scrutinized.

When word was brought that a suspicious stranger had been taken lurking about the fortress, and was actually in the outer court, in durance of the corporal, waiting the pleasure of his excellency, the pride and stateliness of office swelled the bosom of the governor. Giving back his chocolate cup into the hands of the demure damsel, he called for his basket-hilted sword, girded it to his side, twirled up his mustachios, took his seat in a large high-backed chair, assumed a bitter and forbidding aspect, and ordered the prisoner into his presence. The soldier was brought in, still closely pinioned by his captors, and guarded by the .

corporal. He maintained, however, a resolute self-confident air, and returned the sharp, scrutinizing look of the governor with an easy squint, which by no means pleased the punctilious old potentate.

“ Well, culprit,” said the governor, after he had regarded him for a moment in silence, “ what have you to say for yourself — who are you ?”

“ A soldier, just from the wars, who has brought away nothing but scars and bruises.”

“ A soldier—humph—a foot soldier by your garb. I understand you have a fine Arabian horse. I presume you brought him too from the wars, beside your scars and bruises.”

“ May it please your excellency, I have something strange to tell about that horse. Indeed I have one of the most wonderful things to relate. Something too that concerns the security of this fortress, indeed of all Granada. But it is a matter to be imparted only to your private

ear, or in presence of such only as are in your confidence.

The governor considered for a moment, and then directed the corporal and his men to withdraw, but to post themselves outside of the door, and be ready at a call. "This holy friar," said he, "is my confessor, you may say anything in his presence—and this damsel," nodding towards the handmaid, who had loitered with an air of great curiosity, "this damsel is of great secrecy and discretion, and to be trusted with anything."

The soldier gave a glance between a squint and a leer at the demure handmaid. "I am perfectly willing," said he, "that the damsel should remain."

When all the rest had withdrawn, the soldier commenced his story, He was a fluent, smooth-tongued varlet, and had a command of language above his apparent rank.

"May it please your excellency," said he, "I

am, as I before observed, a soldier, and have seen some hard service, but my term of enlistment being expired, I was discharged, not long since, from the army at Valladolid, and set out on foot for my native village in Andalusia. Yesterday evening the sun went down as I was traversing a great dry plain of Old Castile.

“Hold,” cried the Governor, “what is this you say? Old Castile is some two or three hundred miles from this.”

“Even so,” replied the soldier coolly, “I told your excellency I had strange things to relate; but not more strange than true; as your excellency will find, if you will deign me a patient hearing.”

“Proceed, culprit,” said the governor, twirling up his mustachios.

“As the sun went down,” continued the soldier, “I cast my eyes about in search of some quarters for the night, but far as my sight could reach, there were no signs of habitation. I saw

that I should have to make my bed on the naked plain, with my knapsack for a pillow ; but your excellency is an old soldier, and knows that to one who has been in the wars, such a night's lodging is no great hardship."

The governor nodded assent, as he drew his pocket handkerchief out of the basket hilt, to drive away a fly that buzzed about his nose.

" Well, to make a long story short," continued the soldier, " I trudged forward for several miles until I came to a bridge over a deep ravine, through which ran a little thread of water, almost dried up by the summer heat. At one end of the bridge was a Moorish tower, the upper end all in ruins, but a vault in the foundation quite entire. Here, thinks I, is a good place to make a halt ; so I went down to the stream, took a hearty drink, for the water was pure and sweet, and I was parched with thirst ; then, opening my wallet, I took out an onion and a few crusts, which were all my provisions, and seating myself on a stone

on the margin of the stream, began to make my supper ; intending afterwards to quarter myself for the night in the vault of the tower ; and capital quarters they would have been for a campaigner just from the wars, as your excellency, who is an old soldier, may suppose."

"I have put up gladly with worse in my time," said the governor, returning his pocket-handkerchief into the hilt of his sword.

"While I was quietly crunching my crust," pursued the soldier, "I heard something stir within the vault ; I listened—it was the tramp of a horse. By and bye, a man came forth from a door in the foundation of the tower, close by the water's edge, leading a powerful horse by the bridle. I could not well make out what he was by the star-light. It had a suspicious look to be lurking among the ruins of a tower, in that wild solitary place. He might be a mere wayfarer, like myself ; he might be a contrabandista ; he might be a bandalero ! what of that ? thank

heaven and my poverty, I had nothing to lose ; so I set still and crunched my crusts.

“ He led his horse to the water, close by where I was sitting, so that I had a fair opportunity of reconnoitering him. To my surprise he was dressed in a Moorish garb, with a cuirass of steel, and a polished scull cap that I distinguished by the reflection of the stars upon it. His horse too, was harnessed in the Moresco fashion, with great shovel stirrups. He led him, as I said, to the side of the stream, into which the animal plunged his head almost to the eyes, and drank until I thought he would have burst.

“ ‘ Comrade,’ said I, ‘ your steed drinks well ; it’s a good sign when a horse plunges his muzzle bravely into the water.’

“ ‘ He may well drink,’ said the stranger, speaking with a Moorish accent, ‘ it is a good year since he had his last draught.’

“ ‘ By Santiago,’ said I, ‘ that beats even the camels that I have seen in Africa. But come,

you seem to be something of a soldier, will you sit down and take part of a soldier's fare?' In fact I felt the want of a companion in this lonely place, and was willing to put up with an infidel. Besides, as your excellency well knows, a soldier is never very particular about the faith of his company, and soldiers of all countries are comrades on peaceable ground."

The governor again nodded assent.

"Well, as I was saying, I invited him to share my supper, such as it was, for I could not do less in common hospitality. 'I have no time to pause for meat or drink,' said he, 'I have a long journey to make before morning.'

" 'In which direction?' said I.

" 'Andalusia,' said he.

" 'Exactly my route,' said I, 'so, as you won't stop and eat with me, perhaps you will let me mount and ride with you. I see your horse is of a powerful frame, I'll warrant he'll carry double.'

“ ‘ Agreed,’ said the trooper ; and it would not have been civil and soldier-like to refuse, especially as I had offered to share my supper with him. So up he mounted, and up I mounted behind him.

“ ‘ Hold fast,’ said he, ‘ my steed goes like the wind.’

“ ‘ Never fear me,’ said I, and so off we set.

“ From a walk the horse soon passed to a trot, from a trot to a gallop, and from a gallop to a harum scarum scamper. It seemed as if rocks, trees, houses, every thing, flew hurry scurry behind us.

“ ‘ What town is this?’ said I.

“ ‘ Segovia,’ said he ; and before the word was out of his mouth, the towers of Segovia were out of sight. We swept up the Guadarama mountains, and down by the Escorial ; and we skirted the walls of Madrid, and we scoured away across the plains of La Mancha. In this way we went up hill and down dale, by towers and cities, all

buried in deep sleep, and across mountains, and plains, and rivers, just glimmering in the starlight.

“To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper suddenly pulled up on the side of a mountain. ‘Here we are,’ said he, ‘at the end of our journey.’ I looked about, but could see no signs of habitation; nothing but the mouth of a cavern. While I looked I saw multitudes of people in Moorish dresses, some on horseback, some on foot, arriving as if borne by the wind from all points of the compass, and hurrying into the mouth of the cavern, like bees into a hive. Before I could ask a question the trooper struck his long Moorish spurs into the horse’s flanks and dashed in with the throng. We passed along a steep winding way, that descended into the very bowels of the mountain. As we pushed on, a light began to glimmer up, by little and little, like the first glimmerings of day, but what caused it I could not discern.

It grew stronger and stronger, and enabled me to see every thing around. I now noticed, as we passed along, great caverns, opening to the right and left, like halls in an arsenal. In some there were shields, and helmets, and cuirasses, and lances, and scymetars, hanging against the walls; in others there were great heaps of war-like munitions, and camp equipage lying upon the ground.

“ It would have done your excellency’s heart good, being an old soldier, to have seen such grand provision for war. Then, in other caverns, there were long rows of horsemen armed to the teeth, with lances raised and banners unfurled all ready for the field; but they all sat motionless in their saddles like so many statues. In other halls were warriors sleeping on the ground beside their horses, and foot-soldiers in groupes ready to fall into the ranks. All were in old-fashioned Moorish dresses and armour.

“ Well, your excellency, to cut a long story

short, we at length entered an immense cavern, or I may say palace, of grotto work, the walls of which seemed to be veined with gold and silver, and to sparkle with diamonds and sapphires and all kinds of precious stones. At the upper end sat a Moorish king on a golden throne, with his nobles on each side, and a guard of African blacks with drawn scymetars. All the crowd that continued to flock in, and amounted to thousands and thousands, passed one by one before his throne, each paying homage as he passed. Some of the multitude were dressed in magnificent robes, without stain or blemish and sparkling with jewels; others in burnished and enamelled armour; while others were in mouldered and mildewed garments, and in armour all battered and dented and covered with rust.

“I had hitherto held my tongue, for your excellency well knows, it is not for a soldier to ask many questions when on duty, but I could keep silent no longer.

“ ‘Pr’ythee, comrade,’ said I, ‘what is the meaning of all this?’

“ ‘This,’ said the trooper, ‘is a great and fearful mystery. Know, O Christian, that you see before you the court and army of Boabdil the last king of Granada.’

“ ‘What is this you tell me?’ cried I. ‘Boabdil and his court were exiled from the land hundreds of years ago, and all died in Africa.’

“ ‘So it is recorded in your lying chronicles,’ replied the Moor, ‘but know that Boabdil and the warriors who made the last struggle for Granada were all shut up in the mountain by powerful enchantment. As for the king and army that marched forth from Granada at the time of the surrender, they were a mere phantom train, of spirits and demons permitted to assume those shapes to deceive the Christian sovereigns. And furthermore let me tell you, friend, that all Spain is a country under the power of enchantment. There is not a mountain cave, not a

lonely watch-tower in the plains, nor ruined castle on the hills, but has some spell-bound warriors sleeping from age to age within its vaults, until the sins are expiated for which Allah permitted the dominion to pass for a time out of the hands of the faithful. Once every year, on the eve of St. John, they are released from enchantment, from sun-set to sun-rise, and permitted to repair here to pay homage to their sovereign! and the crowds which you beheld swarming into the cavern are Moslem warriors from their haunts in all parts of Spain. For my own part, you saw the ruined tower of the bridge in Old Castile, where I have now wintered and summered for many hundred years, and where I must be back again by day-break. As to the batallions of horse and foot which you beheld draw up in array in the neighbouring caverns, they are the spell-bound warriors of Granada. It is written in the book of fate, that when the enchantment is broken, Boabdil will

descend from the mountain at the head of this army, resume his throne in the Alhambra and his sway of Granada, and gathering together the enchanted warriors, from all parts of Spain, will reconquer the Peninsula and restore it to Moslem rule.'

" ' And when shall this happen?' said I.

" ' Allah alone knows : we had hoped the day of deliverance was at hand ; but there reigns at present a vigilant governor in the Alhambra, a staunch old soldier, well known as governor Manco. While such a warrior holds command of the very outpost, and stands ready to check the first irruption from the mountain, I fear Boabdil and his soldiery must be content to rest upon their arms.' "

Here the governor raised himself somewhat perpendicularly, adjusted his sword, and twirled up his mustachios.

" To make a long story short, and not to fatigue your excellency, the trooper, having

given me this account, dismounted from his steed.

“ ‘Tarry here,’ said he, ‘and guard my steed while I go and bow the knee to Boabdil.’ So saying, he strode away among the throng that pressed forward to the throne.

“ ‘What’s to be done?’ thought I, ‘when thus left to myself; shall I wait here until this infidel returns to whisk me off on his goblin steed, the Lord knows where; or shall I make the most of my time and beat a retreat from this hobgoblin community?’ A soldier’s mind is soon made up, as your excellency well knows. As to the horse, he belonged to an avowed enemy of the faith and the realm, and was a fair prize according to the rules of war. So hoisting myself from the crupper into the saddle, I turned the reins, struck the Moorish stirrups into the sides of the steed, and put him to make the best of his way out of the passage by which he had entered. As we scoured by the halls

where the Moslem horsemen sat in motionless battallions, I thought I heard the clang of armour and a hollow murmur of voices. I gave the steed another taste of the stifrups and doubled my speed. There was now a sound behind me like a rushing blast; I heard the clatter of a thousand hoofs; a countless throng overtook me. I was born along in the press, and hurled forth from the mouth of the cavern, while thousands of shadowy forms were swept off in every direction by the four winds of heaven.

“ In the whirl and confusion of the scene I was thrown senseless to the earth. When I came to myself I was lying on the brow of a hill with the Arabian steed standing beside me; for in falling, my arm had slipt within the bridle, which, I presume, prevented his whisking off to Old Castile.

“ Your excellency may easily judge of my surprise on looking round, to behold hedges of aloes and Indian figs and other proofs of a

southern climate, and to see a great city below me with towers, and palaces, and a grand cathedral.

“ I descended the hill cautiously, leading my steed, for I was afraid to mount him again, lest he should play me some slippery trick. As I descended I met with your patrol, who let me into the secret that it was Granada that lay before me ; and that I was actually under the walls of the Alhambra, the fortress of the redoubted governor Manco, the terror of all enchanted Moslems. When I heard this, I determined at once to seek your excellency, to inform you of all that I had seen, and to warn you of the perils that surround and undermine you, that you may take measures in time to guard your fortress, and the kingdom itself, from this intestine army that lurks in the very bowels of the land.”

“ And pr’ythee, friend, you who are a veteran campaigner, and have seen so much service,”

said the governor, "how would you advise me to proceed, in order to prevent this evil?"

"It is not for a humble private of the ranks," said the soldier modestly, "to pretend to instruct a commander of your excellency's sagacity, but it appears to me that your excellency might cause all the caves and entrances into the mountain to be walled up with solid mason work, so that Boabdil and his army might be completely corked up in their subterranean habitation. If the good father too," added the soldier reverently bowing to the friar, and devoutly crossing himself, "would consecrate the barricadoes with his blessing, and put up a few crosses and reliques and images of saints, I think they might withstand all the power of infidel enchantments."

"They doubtless would be of great avail," said the friar.

The governor now placed his arm akimbo with his hand resting on the hilt of his toledo,

fixed his eye upon the soldier, and gently wagging his head from one side to the other,

“ ‘ So, friend,” said he, “ then you really suppose I am to be gulled with this cock-and-bull story about enchanted mountains and enchanted Moors? Hark ye, culprit!—not another word. An old soldier you may be, but you ’ll find you have an older soldier to deal with, and one not easily outgeneralled. Ho! guards there! put this fellow in irons.”

The demure handmaid would have put in a word in favour of the prisoner, but the governor silenced her with a look.

As they were pinioning the soldier, one of the guards felt something of bulk in his pocket, and drawing it forth, found a long leathern purse that appeared to be well filled. Holding it by one corner, he turned out the contents upon the table before the governor, and never did freebooter’s bag make more gorgeous delivery. Out tumbled rings, and jewels, and

rosaries of pearls, and sparkling diamond crosses, and a profusion of ancient golden coin, some of which fell jingling to the floor, and rolled away to the uttermost parts of the chamber.

For a time the functions of justice were suspended; there was an universal scramble after the glittering fugitives. The governor alone, who was imbued with true Spanish pride, maintained his stately decorum, though his eye betrayed a little anxiety until the last coin and jewel was restored to the sack.

The friar was not so calm; his whole face glowed like a furnace, and his eyes twinkled and flashed at sight of the rosaries and crosses.

"Sacrilegious wretch that thou art!" exclaimed he; "what church or sanctuary hast thou been plundering of these sacred relics?"

"Neither one nor the other, holy father. If they be sacrilegious spoils, they must have been taken in times long past, by the infidel trooper I have mentioned. I was just going to

tell his excellency when he interrupted me, that on taking possession of the trooper's horse, I unhooked a leathern sack which hung at the saddle-bow, and which I presume contained the plunder of his campaignings in days of old, when the Moors overran the country."

"Mighty well; at present you will make up your mind to take up your quarters in a chamber of the vermilion tower, which, though not under a magic spell, will hold you as safe as any cave of your enchanted Moors."

"Your excellency will do as you think proper," said the prisoner coolly. "I shall be thankful to your excellency for any accommodation in the fortress. A soldier who has been in the wars, as your excellency well knows, is not particular about his lodgings: provided I have a snug dungeon and regular rations, I shall manage to make myself comfortable. I would only entreat that while your excellency is so careful about me, you would have an eye to

your fortress, and think on the hint I dropped about stopping up the entrances to the mountain."

Here ended the scene. The prisoner was conducted to a strong dungeon in the vermilion tower, the Arabian steed was led to his excellency's stable, and the trooper's sack was deposited in his excellency's strong box. To the latter, it is true, the friar made some demur, questioning whether the sacred relics, which were evidently sacrilegious spoils, should not be placed in custody of the church; but as the governor was peremptory on the subject, and was absolute lord in the Alhambra, the friar discreetly dropped the discussion, but determined to convey intelligence of the fact to the church dignitaries in Granada.

To explain these prompt and rigid measures on the part of old Governor Manco, it is proper to observe, that about this time the Alpuxarra mountains in the neighbourhood of Granada were terribly infested by a gang of robbers,

under the command of a daring chief named Manuel Borasco, who were accustomed to prowl about the country, and even to enter the city in various disguises, to gain intelligence of the departure of convoys of merchandize, or travellers with well-lined purses, whom they took care to waylay in distant and solitary passes of their road. These repeated and daring outrages had awakened the attention of government, and the commanders of the various posts had received instructions to be on the alert and to take up all suspicious stragglers. Governor Manco was particularly zealous in consequence of the various stigmas that had been cast upon his fortress, and he now doubted not that he had entrapped some formidable desperado of this gang.

In the mean time the story took wind, and became the talk, not merely of the fortress, but of the whole city of Granada. It was said that the noted robber Manuel Borasco, the terror of the Alpuxarras, had fallen into the clutches

of old Governor Manco, and been cooped up by him in a dungeon of the vermillion tower ; and every one who had been robbed by him flocked to recognize the marauder. The vermillion towers, as is well known, stand apart from the Alhambra on a sister hill, separated from the main fortress by the ravine down which passes the main avenue. There were no outer walls, but a centinel patrolled before the tower. The window of the chamber in which the soldier was confined, was strongly grated, and looked upon a small esplanade. Here the good folks of Granada repaired to gaze at him, as they would at a laughing hyena, grinning through the cage of a menagerie. Nobody, however, recognized him for Manuel Borasco, for that terrible robber was noted for a ferocious physiognomy, and had by no means the good-humoured squint of the prisoner. Visitors came not merely from the city, but from all parts of the country ; but nobody knew him, and there

began to be doubts in the minds of the common people whether there might not be some truth in his story. That Boabdil and his army were shut up in the mountain, was an old tradition which many of the ancient inhabitants had heard from their fathers. Numbers went up to the mountain of the sun, or rather of St. Elena, in search of the cave mentioned by the soldier; and saw and peeped into the deep dark pit, descending, no one knows how far, into the mountain, and which remains there to this day—the fabled entrance to the subterranean abode of Boabdil.

By degrees the soldier became popular with the common people. A freebooter of the mountains is by no means the opprobrious character in Spain that a robber is in any other country: on the contrary, he is a kind of chivalrous personage in the eyes of the lower classes. There is always a disposition, also, to cavil at the conduct of those in command, and many began to murmur at the high-handed measures

of old Governor Manco, and to look upon the prisoner in the light of a martyr.

The soldier, moreover, was a merry, waggish fellow, that had a joke for every one who came near his window, and a soft speech for every female. He had procured an old guitar also, and would sit by his window and sing ballads and love ditties, to the delight of the women of the neighbourhood, who would assemble on the esplanade in the evenings and dance before his music. Having trimmed off his rough beard, his sun-burnt face found favour in the eyes of the fair, and the demure handmaid of the governor declared that his squint was perfectly irresistible. This kind-hearted damsel had from the first evinced a deep sympathy in his fortunes, and having in vain tried to mollify the governor, had set to work privately to mitigate the rigour of his dispensations. Every day she brought the prisoner some crumbs of comfort which had fallen from the governor's table, or been abstracted

from his larder, together with, now and then, a consoling bottle of choice Val de Peñas, or rich Malaga.

While this petty treason was going on, in the very centre of the old governor's citadel, a storm of open war was brewing up among his external foes. The circumstance of a bag of gold and jewels having been found upon the person of the supposed robber, had been reported with many exaggerations, in Granada. A question of territorial jurisdiction was immediately started by the governor's inveterate rival, the captain general. He insisted that the prisoner had been captured without the precincts of the Alhambra, and within the rules of his authority. He demanded his body therefore, and the *spolia opima* taken with him. Due information having been carried likewise by the friar to the grand Inquisitor of the crosses and rosaries, and other reliques contained in the bag, he claimed the culprit as having been guilty of sacrilege, and insisted that his

plunder was due to the church, and his body to the next auto da fe. The feuds ran high, the governor was furious, and swore, rather than surrender his captive, he would hang him up within the Alhambra, as a spy caught within the pur-lieus of the fortress.

The captain general threatened to send a body of soldiers to transfer the prisoner from the vermillion tower to the city. The grand Inquisitor was equally bent upon despatching a number of the familiars of the Holy Office. Word was brought late at night to the governor of these machinations. "Let them come," said he, "they'll find me before hand with them ; he must rise bright and early who would take in an old soldier." He accordingly issued orders to have the prisoner removed at day break, to the donjon keep within the walls of the Alhambra. "And d'ye hear, child," said he to his demure handmaid, "tap at my door, and wake me before cock-crowing, that I may see to the matter myself."

The day dawned, the cock crowed, but nobody tapped at the door of the governor. The sun rose high above the mountain tops, and glittered in at his casement, ere the governor was wakened from his morning dreams by his veteran corporal, who stood before him with terror stamped upon his iron visage.

"He's off! he's gone!" cried the corporal, gasping for breath.

"Who's off—who's gone?"

"The soldier—the robber—the devil for aught I know; his dungeon is empty, but the door locked, no one knows how he has escaped out of it."

"Who saw him last?"

"Your handmaid, she brought him his supper."

"Let her be called instantly."

Here was new matter of confusion. The chamber of the demure damsel was likewise

empty, her bed had not been slept in : she had doubtless gone off with the culprit, as she had appeared, for some days past, to have frequent conversations with him.

This was wounding the old governor in a tender part, but he had scarce time to wince at it, when new misfortunes broke upon his view. On going into his cabinet he found his strong box open, the leather purse of the trooper abstracted, and with it, a couple of corpulent bags of doubloons.

But how, and which way had the fugitives escaped ? An old peasant who lived in a cottage by the road-side, leading up into the Sierra, declared that he had heard the tramp of a powerful steed just before day-break, passing up into the mountains. He had looked out at his casement, and could just distinguish a horseman, with a female seated before him.

“ Search the stables ! ” cried governor Manco. The stables were searched ; all the horses were

in their stalls, excepting the Arabian steed. In his place was a stout cudgel tied to the manger, and on it a label bearing these words, "A gift to Governor Manco, from an Old Soldier."

LEGEND
OF THE
TWO DISCREET STATUES.

LEGEND

OF THE

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THERE lived once in a waste apartment of the Alhambra, a merry little fellow, named Lope Sanchez, who worked in the gardens, and was as brisk and blithe as a grasshopper, singing all day long. He was the life and soul of the fortress; when his work was over, he would sit on one of the stone benches of the esplanade, and strum his guitar, and sing long ditties about the Cid, and Bernardo del Carpio, and Fernando del Pulgar, and other Spanish heroes, for the amusement of

the old soldiers of the fortress, or would strike up a merrier tune, and set the girls dancing boleros and fandangos.

Like most little men, Lope Sanchez had a strapping buxom dame for a wife, who could almost have put him in her pocket ; but he lacked the usual poor man's lot—instead of ten children he had but one. This was a little black-eyed girl about twelve years of age, named Sanchica, who was as merry as himself, and the delight of his heart. She played about him as he worked in the gardens, danced to his guitar as he sat in the shade, and ran as wild as a young fawn about the groves and alleys and ruined halls of the Alhambra.

It was now the eve of the blessed St. John, and the holiday loving gossips of the Alhambra, men, women, and children, went up at night to the mountain of the sun, which rises above the Generalife, to keep their midsummer vigil on its level summit. It was a bright moonlight night, and all the mountains were grey and silvery, and

the city, with its domes and spires, lay in shadows below, and the Vega was like a fairy land, with haunted streams gleaming among its dusky groves. On the highest part of the mountain they lit up a bon-fire, according to an old custom of the country handed down from the Moors. The inhabitants of the surrounding country were keeping a similar vigil, and bon-fires, here and there in the Vega, and along the folds of the mountains, blazed up palely in the moonlight.

The evening was gaily passed in dancing to the guitar of Lope Sanchez, who was never so joyous as when on a holiday revel of the kind. While the dance was going on, the little San-chica with some of her playmates sported among the ruins of an old Moorish fort that crowns the mountain, when in gathering pebbles in the fosse, she found a small hand curiously carved of jet, the fingers closed, and the thumb firmly clasped upon them. Overjoyed with her

good fortune, she ran to her mother with her prize. It immediately became a subject of sage speculation, and was eyed by some with superstitious distrust. "Throw it away," said one; "it's Moorish—depend upon it there's mischief and witchcraft in it." "By no means," said another; "you may sell it for something to the jewellers of the Zacatin." In the midst of this discussion an old tawny soldier drew near, who had served in Africa and was as swarthy as a Moor. He examined the hand with a knowing look. "I have seen things of this kind," said he, "among the Moors of Barbary. It is a great virtue to guard against the evil eye, and all kinds of spells and enchantments. I give you joy, friend Lope, this bodes good luck to your child."

Upon hearing this, the wife of Lope Sanchez tied the little hand of jet to a ribbon, and hung it round the neck of her daughter.

The sight of this talisman called up all the favourite superstitions about the Moors. The

dance was neglected and they sat in groupes on the ground telling old legendary tales handed down from their ancestors. Some of their stories turned upon the wonders of the very mountain upon which they were seated, which is a famous hobgoblin region. One ancient crone gave a long account of the subterranean palace in the bowels of that mountain where Boabdil and all his Moslem court are said to remain enchanted. "Among yonder ruins," said she, pointing to some crumbling walls and mounds of earth on a distant part of the mountain, "there is a deep black pit that goes down, down into the very heart of the mountain. For all the money in Granada I would not look down into it. Once upon a time a poor man of the Alhambra, who tended goats upon this mountain, scrambled down into that pit after a kid that had fallen in. He came out again all wild and staring, and told such things of what he had seen, that every one thought

his brain was turned. He raved for a day or two about the hobgoblin Moors that had pursued him in the cavern, and could hardly be persuaded to drive his goats up again to the mountain. He did so at last, but, poor man, he never came down again. The neighbours found his goats browsing about the Moorish ruins, and his hat and mantle lying near the mouth of the pit, but he was never more heard of."

The little Sanchica listened with breathless attention to this story. She was of a curious nature, and felt immediately a great hankering to peep into this dangerous pit. Stealing away from her companions she sought the distant ruins, and after groping for some time among them came to a small hollow, or basin, near the brow of the mountain, where it swept steeply down into the valley of the Darro. In the centre of this basin yawned the mouth of the pit. Sanchica ventured to the verge and peeped in. All was black as pitch, and gave an idea of

immeasurable depth. Her blood ran cold ; she drew back, then peeped again, then would have run away, then took another peep—the very horror of the thing was delightful to her. At length she rolled a large stone and pushed it over the brink. For some time it fell in silence ; then struck some rocky projection with a violent crash, then rebounded from side to side, rumbling and tumbling, with a noise like thunder, then made a final splash into water, far, far below—and all was again silent.

The silence, however, did not long continue. It seemed as if something had been awakened within this dreary abyss. A murmuring sound gradually rose out of the pit like the hum and buzz of a bee hive. It grew louder and louder ; there was the confusion of voices as of a distant multitude, together with the faint din of arms, clash of cymbals and clangour of trumpets, as if some army were marshalling for battle in the very bowels of the mountain.

The child drew off with silent awe, and hastened back to the place where she had left her parents and their companions. All were gone. The bon-fire was expiring, and its last wreath of smoke curling up in the moonshine. The distant fires that had blazed along the mountains and in the Vega were all extinguished, and every thing seemed to have sunk to repose. Sanchica called her parents and some of her companions by name, but received no reply. She ran down the side of the mountain, and by the gardens of the Generalife, until she arrived in the alley of trees leading to the Alhambra, when she seated herself on a bench of a woody recess to recover breath. The bell from the watch-tower of the Alhambra tolled midnight. There was a deep tranquillity, as if all nature slept; excepting the low tinkling sound of an unseen stream that ran under the covert of the bushes. The breathing sweetness of the atmosphere was lulling her to sleep, when her eye

was caught by something glittering at a distance, and to her surprise she beheld a long cavalcade of Moorish warriors pouring down the mountain side and along the leafy avenues. Some were armed with lances and shields; others with scymetars and battle axes, and with polished cuirasses that flashed in the moonbeams. Their horses pranced proudly and champed upon their bits, but their tramp caused no more sound than if they had been shod with felt, and the riders were all as pale as death. Among them rode a beautiful lady with a crowned head and long golden locks entwined with pearls. The housings of her palfry were of crimson velvet embroidered with gold, and swept the earth; but she rode all disconsolate, with eyes ever fixed upon the ground.

Then succeeded a train of courtiers magnificently arrayed in robes and turbans of divers colours, and amidst them, on a cream-coloured charger, rode King Boabdil el Chico, in a royal mantle covered with jewels, and a crown spark-

ling with diamonds. The little Sanchica knew him by his yellow beard, and his resemblance to his portrait, which she had often seen in the picture gallery of the Generalife. She gazed in wonder and admiration at this royal pageant, as it passed glistening among the trees; but though she knew these monarchs and courtiers and warriors, so pale and silent, were out of the common course of nature, and things of magic and enchantment, yet she looked on with a bold heart, such courage did she derive from the mystic talisman of the hand, which was suspended about her neck.

The cavalcade having passed by, she rose and followed. It continued on to the great gate of justice, which stood wide open; the old invalid centinels on duty lay on the stone benches of the barbican, buried in profound and apparently charmed sleep, and the phantom pageant swept noiselessly by them with flaunting banner and triumphant state. Sanchica would have fol-

lowed; but to her surprise she beheld an opening in the earth, within the barbican, leading down beneath the foundations of the tower. She entered for a little distance, and was encouraged to proceed by finding steps rudely hewn in the rock, and a vaulted passage here and there lit up by a silver lamp, which, while it gave light, diffused likewise a grateful fragrance. Venturing on, she came at last to a great hall, wrought out of the heart of the mountain, magnificently furnished in the Moorish style, and lighted up by silver and crystal lamps. Here, on an ottoman, sat an old man in Moorish dress, with a long white beard, nodding and dozing, with a staff in his hand, which seemed ever to be slipping from his grasp; while at a little distance sat a beautiful lady, in ancient Spanish dress, with a coronet all sparkling with diamonds, and her hair entwined with pearls, who was softly playing on a silver lyre. The little Sanchica now recollected a story she had

heard among the old people of the Alhambra, **concerning** a Gothic princess confined in the **centre** of the mountain by an old Arabian **magician**, whom she kept bound up in magic sleep **by the** power of music.

The lady paused with surprise at seeing a **mortal** in that enchanted hall. "Is it the eve **of the** blessed St. John?" said she.

"It is," replied Sanchica.


"Then for one night the magic charm is **suspended**. Come hither, child, and fear not. I am a Christian like thyself, though bound here by enchantment. Touch my fetters with the talisman that hangs about thy neck, and for this night I shall be free."

So saying, she opened her robes and displayed a broad golden band round her waist, and a golden chain that fastened her to the ground. The child hesitated not to apply the little hand of jet to the golden band, and immediately the chain fell to the earth. At the sound the old

man woke and began to rub his eyes ; but the lady ran her fingers over the chords of the lyre, and again he fell into a slumber and began to nod, and his staff to falter in his hand. "Now," said the lady, "touch his staff with the talismanic hand of jet." The child did so, and it fell from his grasp, and he sunk in a deep sleep on the ottoman. The lady gently laid the silver lyre on the ottoman, leaning it against the head of the sleeping magician ; then touching the chords until they vibrated in his ear—"O potent spirit of harmony," said she, "continue thus to hold his senses in thralldom till the return of day. Now follow me, my child," continued she, "and thou shalt behold the Alhambra as it was in the days of its glory, for thou hast a magic talisman that reveals all enchantments." Sanchica followed the lady in silence. They passed up through the entrance of the cavern into the barbican of the gate of justice, and thence to the Plaza de los Algibes, or esplanade within the

fortress. This was all filled with Moorish soldiery, horse and foot, marshalled in squadrons, with banners displayed. There were royal guards also at the portal, and rows of African blacks with drawn scymetars. No one spoke a word, and Sanchica passed on fearlessly after her conductor. Her astonishment increased on entering the royal palace, in which she had been reared. The broad moonshine lit up all the halls and courts and gardens almost as brightly as if it were day, but revealed a far different scene from that to which she was accustomed. The walls of the apartments were no longer stained and rent by time. Instead of cobwebs, they were now hung with rich silks of Damascus, and the gildings and arabesque paintings were restored to their original brilliancy and freshness. The halls, instead of being naked and unfurnished, were set out with divans and ottomans of the rarest stuffs, embroidered with pearls and studded with precious gems, and all the fountains in the courts and gardens were playing.

The kitchens were again in full operation ; cooks were busy preparing shadowy dishes, and roasting and boiling the phantoms of pullets and partridges ; servants were hurrying to and fro with silver dishes heaped up with dainties, and arranging a delicious banquet. The Court of Lions was thronged with guards, and courtiers, and alfaquis, as in the old times of the Moors ; and at the upper end, in the saloon of judgment, sat Boabdil on his throne, surrounded by his court, and swaying a shadowy sceptre for the night. Notwithstanding all this throng and seeming bustle, not a voice nor a footstep was to be heard ; nothing interrupted the midnight silence but the splashing of the fountains. The little Sanchica followed her conductress in mute amazement about the palace, until they came to a portal opening to the vaulted passages beneath the great tower of Comares. On each side of the portal sat the figure of a nymph, wrought out of alabaster. Their heads were turned



aside, and their regards fixed upon the same spot within the vault. The enchanted lady paused, and beckoned the child to her. "Here," said she, "is a great secret, which I will reveal to thee in reward for thy faith and courage. These discreet statues watch over a mighty treasure hidden in old times by a Moorish king. Tell thy father to search the spot on which their eyes are fixed, and he will find what will make him richer than any man in Granada. Thy innocent hands alone, however, gifted as thou art also with the talisman, can remove the treasure. Bid thy father use it discreetly, and devote a part of it to the performance of daily masses for my deliverance from this unholy enchantment."

When the lady had spoken these words, she led the child onward to the little garden of Lindaraxa, which is hard by the vault of the statues. The moon trembled upon the waters of the solitary fountain in the centre of the

garden, and shed a tender light upon the orange and citron trees. The beautiful lady plucked a branch of myrtle, and wreathed it round the head of the child. "Let this be a memento," said she, "of what I have revealed to thee, and a testimonial of its truth. My hour is come—I must return to the enchanted hall; follow me not, lest evil befall thee—farewell. Remember what I have said, and have masses performed for my deliverance." So saying, the lady entered a dark passage leading beneath the tower of Comares, and was no longer seen.

The faint crowing of a cock was now heard from the cottages below the Alhambra, in the valley of the Darro, and a pale streak of light began to appear above the eastern mountains. A slight wind arose, there was a sound like the rustling of dry leaves through the courts and corridors, and door after door shut to with a jarring sound.

Sanchica returned to the scenes she had so

lately beheld thronged with the shadowy multitude, but Boabdil and his phantom court were gone. The moon shone into empty halls and galleries stripped of their transient splendour, stained and dilapidated by time, and hung with cobwebs. The bat flitted about in the uncertain light, and the frog croaked from the fish-pond.

Sanchica now made the best of her way to a remote staircase that led up to the humble apartment occupied by her family. The door as usual was open, for Lope Sanchez was too poor to need bolt or bar ; she crept quietly to her pallet, and, putting the myrtle wreath beneath her pillow, soon fell asleep.

In the morning she related all that had befallen her to her father. Lope Sanchez, however, treated the whole as a mere dream, and laughed at the child for her credulity. He went forth to his customary labours in the garden, but had not been there long when his little daughter came running to him almost breathless. " Father !

father!" cried she, "behold the myrtle wreath which the Moorish lady bound round my head."

Lope Sanchez gazed with astonishment, for the stalk of the myrtle was of pure gold, and every leaf was a sparkling emerald! Being not much accustomed to precious stones, he was ignorant of the real value of the wreath, but he saw enough to convince him that it was something more substantial than the stuff that dreams are generally made of, and that at any rate the child had dreamt to some purpose. His first care was to enjoin the most absolute secrecy upon his daughter; in this respect, however, he was secure, for she had discretion far beyond her years or sex. He then repaired to the vault, where stood the statues of the two Alabaster Nymphs. He remarked that their heads were turned from the portal, and that the regards of each were fixed upon the same point in the interior of the building. Lope Sanchez could not but admire this most discreet contrivance for

guarding a secret. He drew a line from the eyes of the statues to the point of regard, made a private mark on the wall, and then retired.

All day, however, the mind of Lope Sanchez was distracted with a thousand cares. He could not help hovering within distant view of the two statues, and became nervous from the dread that the golden secret might be discovered. Every footstep that approached the place made him tremble. He would have given anything could he but have turned the heads of the statues, forgetting that they had looked precisely in the same direction for some hundreds of years, without any person being the wiser.

“A plague upon them,” he would say to himself, “they’ll betray all; did ever mortal hear of such a mode of guarding a secret?” Then on hearing any one advance, he would steal off, as though his very lurking near the place would awaken suspicions. Then he would return cautiously, and peep from a distance to see if every

thing was secure, but the sight of the statues would again call forth his indignation. "Aye, there they stand," would he say, "always looking, and looking, and looking, just where they should not. Confound them! they are just like all their sex; if they have not tongues to tattle with, they'll be sure to do it with their eyes."

At length, to his relief, the long anxious day drew to a close. The sound of footsteps was no longer heard in the echoing halls of the Alhambra; the last stranger passed the threshold, the great portal was barred and bolted, and the bat and the frog, and the hooting owl gradually resumed their nightly vocations in the deserted palace.

Lope Sanchez waited, however, until the night was far advanced before he ventured with his little daughter to the hall of the two nymphs. He found them looking as knowingly and mysteriously as ever at the secret place of deposit.

"By your leaves, gentle ladies," thought Lope Sanchez, as he passed between them, "I will relieve you from this charge that must have set so heavy in your minds for the last two or three centuries." He accordingly went to work at the part of the wall which he had marked, and in a little while laid open a concealed recess, in which stood two great jars of porcelain. He attempted to draw them forth, but they were immoveable, until touched by the innocent hand of his little daughter. With her aid he dislodged them from their niche, and found, to his great joy, that they were filled with pieces of Moorish gold, mingled with jewels and precious stones. Before daylight he managed to convey them to his chamber, and left the two guardian statues with their eyes still fixed on the vacant wall.

Lope Sanchez had thus on a sudden become a rich man; but riches, as usual, brought a world of cares to which he had hitherto been a stranger. How was he to convey away his

wealth with safety? How was he even to enter upon the enjoyment of it without awakening suspicion? Now, too, for the first time in his life the dread of robbers entered into his mind. He looked with terror at the insecurity of his habitation, and went to work to barricado the doors and windows; yet after all his precautions he could not sleep soundly. His usual gaiety was at an end, he had no longer a joke or a song for his neighbours, and, in short, became the most miserable animal in the Alhambra. His old comrades remarked this alteration, pitied him heartily, and began to desert him; thinking he must be falling into want, and in danger of looking to them for assistance. Little did they suspect that his only calamity was riches.

The wife of Lope Sanchez shared his anxiety, but then she had ghostly comfort. We ought before this to have mentioned that Lope, being rather a light inconsiderate little man, his wife

was accustomed, in all grave matters, to seek the counsel and ministry of her confessor Fray Simon, a sturdy broad-shouldered, blue-bearded, bullet-headed friar of the neighbouring convent of San Francisco, who was in fact the spiritual comforter of half the good wives of the neighbourhood. He was moreover in great esteem among divers sisterhoods of nuns; who requited him for his ghostly services by frequent presents of those little dainties and knick-knacks manufactured in convents, such as delicate confections, sweet biscuits, and bottles of spiced cordials, found to be marvellous restoratives after fasts and vigils.

Fray Simon thrived in the exercise of his functions. His oily skin glistened in the sunshine as he toiled up the hill of the Alhambra on a sultry day. Yet notwithstanding his sleek condition, the knotted rope round his waist showed the austerity of his self-discipline; the multitude doffed their caps to him as a mirror

of piety, and even the dogs scented the odour of sanctity that exhaled from his garments, and howled from their kennels as he passed.

Such was Fray Simon, the spiritual counsellor of the comely wife of Lope Sanchez ; and as the father confessor is the domestic confidant of woman in humble life in Spain, he was soon made acquainted, in great secrecy, with the story of the hidden treasure.

The friar opened eyes and mouth and crossed himself a dozen times at the news. After a moment's pause, " Daughter of my soul ! " said he, " know that thy husband has committed a double sin—a sin against both state and church ! The treasure he hath thus seized upon for himself, being found in the royal domains, belongs of course to the crown ; but being infidel wealth, rescued as it were from the very fangs of Satan, should be devoted to the church. Still, however, the matter may be accommodated. Bring hither the myrtle wreath."

When the good father beheld it, his eyes twinkled more than ever with admiration of the size and beauty of the emeralds. "This," said he, "being the first fruits of this discovery, should be dedicated to pious purposes. I will hang it up as a votive offering before the image of San Francisco in our chapel, and will earnestly pray to him, this very night, that your husband be permitted to remain in quiet possession of your wealth."

The good dame was delighted to make her peace with heaven at so cheap a rate, and the friar, putting the wreath under his mantle, departed with saintly steps toward his convent.

When Lope Sanchez came home, his wife told him what had passed. He was excessively provoked, for he lacked his wife's devotion, and had for some time groaned in secret at the domestic visitations of the friar. "Woman," said he, "what hast thou done? thou hast put every thing at hazard by thy tattling."

“What!” cried the good woman, “would you forbid my disburthening my conscience to my confessor?”

“No, wife! confess as many of your own sins as you please; but as to this money digging, it is a sin of my own, and my conscience is very easy under the weight of it.”

There was no use, however, in complaining; the secret was told, and, like water spilled on the sand, was not again to be gathered. Their only chance was, that the friar would be discreet.

“The next day, while Lope Sanchez was abroad, there was a humble knocking at the door, and Fray Simon entered with meek and demure countenance.”

“Daughter,” said he, “I have prayed earnestly to San Francisco, and he has heard my prayer. In the dead of the night the saint appeared to me in a dream, but with a frowning aspect. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘dost thou pray to me to dispense with

this treasure of the Gentiles, when thou seest the poverty of my chapel? Go to the house of Lope Sanchez, crave in my name a portion of the Moorish gold, to furnish two candlesticks for the main altar, and let him possess the residue in peace.’”

When the good woman heard of this vision, she crossed herself with awe, and going to the secret place where Lope had hid the treasure, she filled a great leathern purse with pieces of Moorish gold, and gave it to the friar. The pious monk bestowed upon her, in return, benedictions enough, if paid by Heaven, to enrich her race to the latest posterity; then slipping the purse into the sleeve of his habit, he folded his hands upon his breast, and departed with an air of humble thankfulness.

When Lope Sanchez heard of this second donation to the church, he had well nigh lost his senses. “Unfortunate man,” cried he, “what will become of me? I shall be robbed by peace-

meal; I shall be ruined and brought to beggary!"

It was with the utmost difficulty that his wife could pacify him, by reminding him of the countless wealth that yet remained, and how considerate it was for San Francisco to rest contented with so very small a portion.

Unluckily, Fray Simon had a number of poor relations to be provided for, not to mention some half-dozen sturdy bullet-headed orphan children, and destitute foundlings that he had taken under his care. He repeated his visits, therefore, from day to day, with solicitations on behalf of Saint Dominick, Saint Andrew, Saint James, until poor Lope was driven to despair, and found that, unless he got out of the reach of this holy friar, he should have to make peace offerings to every saint in the Kalendar. He determined, therefore, to pack up his remaining wealth, beat a secret retreat in the night, and make off to another part of the kingdom.

Full of his project, he bought a stout mule for the purpose, and tethered it in a gloomy vault underneath the tower of the seven floors; the very place from whence the Belludo, or goblin horse without a head, is said to issue forth at midnight, and to scour the streets of Granada, pursued by a pack of hell-hounds. Lope Sanchez had little faith in the story, but availed himself of the dread occasioned by it, knowing that no one would be likely to pry into the subterranean stable of the phantom steed. He sent off his family in the course of the day, with orders to wait for him at a distant village of the Vega. As the night advanced, he conveyed his treasure to the vault under the tower, and having loaded his mule, he led it forth, and cautiously descended the dusky avenue.

Honest Lope had taken his measures with the utmost secrecy, imparting them to no one but the faithful wife of his bosom. By some miraculous revelation, however, they became

known to Fray Simon. The zealous friar beheld these infidel treasures on the point of slipping for ever out of his grasp, and determined to have one more dash at them for the benefit of the church and San Francisco. Accordingly, when the bells had rung for animas, and all the Alhambra was quiet, he stole out of his convent, and, descending through the gate of justice, concealed himself among the thickets of roses and laurels that border the great avenue. Here he remained, counting the quarters of hours as they were sounded on the bell of the watch tower, and listening to the dreary hootings of owls, and the distant barking of dogs from the gypsey caverns.

At length he heard the tramp of hoofs, and, through the gloom of the overshadowing trees, imperfectly beheld a steed descending the avenue. The sturdy friar chuckled at the idea of the knowing turn he was about to serve honest Lope.

Tucking up the skirts of his habit, and wriggling like a cat watching a mouse, he waited until his prey was directly before him, when darting forth from his leafy covert, and putting one hand on the shoulder and the other on the crupper, he made a vault that would not have disgraced the most experienced master of equitation, and alighted well-forked astride the steed. "A ha!" said the sturdy friar, "we shall now see who best understands the game." He had scarce uttered the words when the mule began to kick, and rear, and plunge, and then set off full speed down the hill. The friar attempted to check him, but in vain. He bounded from rock to rock, and bush to bush; the friar's habit was torn to ribbons and fluttered in the wind, his shaven poll received many a hard knock from the branches of the trees, and many a scratch from the brambles. To add to his terror and distress, he found a pack of seven hounds in full cry at his heels, and perceived too late,

that he was actually mounted upon the terrible Belludo !

Away then they went, according to the ancient phrase, "pull devil, pull friar," down the great avenue, across the Plaza Nueva, along the Zacatin, around the Vivairambla — never did huntsman and hound make a more furious run, or more infernal uproar. In vain did the friar invoke every saint in the kalendar, and the holy virgin into the bargain ; every time he mentioned a name of the kind it was like a fresh application of the spur, and made the Belludo bound as high as a house. Through the remainder of the night was the unlucky Fray Simon carried hither and thither, and whither he would not, until every bone in his body ached, and he suffered a loss of leather too grievous to be mentioned. At length the crowing of a cock gave the signal of returning day. At the sound the goblin steed wheeled about, and galloped back for his tower. Again he scoured the Vivairam-

bla, the Zacatin, the Plaza Nueva, and the avenue of fountains, the seven dogs yelling, and barking, and leaping up, and snapping at the heels of the terrified friar. The first streak of day had just appeared as they reached the tower; here the goblin steed kicked up his heels, sent the friar a somerset through the air, plunged into the dark vault followed by the infernal pack, and a profound silence succeeded to the late deafening clamour.

Was ever so diabolical a trick played off upon a holy friar? A peasant going to his labours at early dawn found the unfortunate Fray Simon lying under a fig-tree at the foot of the tower, but so bruised and bedevilled that he could neither speak nor move. He was conveyed with all care and tenderness to his cell, and the story went that he had been waylaid and maltreated by robbers. A day or two elapsed before he recovered the use of his limbs; he consoled himself, in the mean time, with the thoughts that

though the mule with the treasure had escaped him, he had previously had some rare pickings at the infidel spoils. His first care on being able to use his limbs, was to search beneath his pallet, where he had secreted the myrtle wreath and the leathern pouches of gold extracted from the piety of dame Sanchez. What was his dismay at finding the wreath, in effect, but a withered branch of myrtle, and the leathern pouches filled with sand and gravel!

Fray Simon, with all his chagrin, had the discretion to hold his tongue, for to betray the secret might draw on him the ridicule of the public, and the punishment of his superior: it was not until many years afterwards, on his death-bed, that he revealed to his confessor his nocturnal ride on the Belludo.

Nothing was heard of Lope Sanchez for a long time after his disappearance from the Alhambra. His memory was always cherished as that of a merry companion, though it was

fearful, from the care and melancholy observed in his conduct shortly before his mysterious departure, that poverty and distress had driven him to some extremity. Some years afterwards one of his old companions, an invalid soldier, being at Malaga, was knocked down and nearly run over by a coach and six. The carriage stopped; an old gentleman magnificently dressed, with a bag wig and sword, stepped out to assist the poor invalid. What was the astonishment of the latter to behold in this grand cavalier his old friend Lope Sanchez, who was actually celebrating the marriage of his daughter Sanchica with one of the first grandees in the land.

The carriage contained the bridal party. There was dame Sanchez, now grown as round as a barrel, and dressed out with feathers and jewels, and necklaces of pearls and necklaces of diamonds, and rings on every finger, and altogether a finery of apparel that had not been seen since the days of Queen Sheba. The little

Sanchica had now grown to be a woman, and for grace and beauty might have been mistaken for a duchess, if not a princess outright. The bridegroom sat beside her—rather a withered, spindle-shanked little man, but this only proved him to be of the true blue blood, a legitimate Spanish grandee being rarely above three cubits in stature. The match had been of the mother's making.

Riches had not spoiled the heart of honest Lope. He kept his old comrade with him for several days; feasted him like a king, took him to plays and bull-fights, and at length sent him away rejoicing, with a big bag of money for himself, and another to be distributed among his ancient messmates of the Alhambra.

Lope always gave out that a rich brother had died in America and left him heir to a copper mine; but the shrewd gossips of the Alhambra insist that his wealth was all derived from his having discovered the secret guarded by the two

marble nymphs of the Alhambra. It is remarked that these very discreet statues continue, even unto the present day, with their eyes fixed most significantly on the same part of the wall; which leads many to suppose there is still some hidden treasure remaining there well worthy the attention of the enterprizing traveller. Though others, and particularly all female visitors, regard them with great complacency as lasting monuments of the fact that women can keep a secret.

MUHAMED ABU ALAHMAR,
THE
FOUNDER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

MUHAMED ABU ALAHMAR,

THE

FOUNDER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

HAVING dealt so freely in the marvellous legends of the Alhambra, I feel as if bound to give the reader a few facts concerning its sober history, or rather the history of those magnificent princes, its founder and finisher, to whom the world is indebted for so beautiful and romantic an oriental monument. To obtain these facts, I descended from this region of fancy and fable, where every thing is liable to take an

imaginative tint, and carried my researches among the dusty tomes of the old Jesuits' library in the university. This once boasted repository of erudition is now a mere shadow of its former self, having been stripped of its manuscripts and rarest works by the French, when masters of Granada. Still it contains, among many ponderous tomes of polemics of the Jesuit fathers, several curious tracts of Spanish literature ; and, above all, a number of those antiquated, dusty, parchment-bound chronicles, for which I have a peculiar veneration.

In this old library I have passed many delightful hours of quiet, undisturbed literary foraging, for the keys of the doors and book cases were kindly entrusted to me, and I was left alone to rummage at my leisure—a rare indulgence in these sanctuaries of learning, which too often tantalize the thirsty student with the sight of sealed fountains of knowledge.

In the course of these visits I gleaned the

following particulars concerning the historical characters in question.

The Moors of Granada regarded the Alhambra as a miracle of art, and had a tradition that the king who founded it dealt in magic, or, at least, was versed in alchemy, by means whereof he procured the immense sums of gold expended in its erection. A brief view of his reign will show the real secret of his wealth.

The name of this monarch, as inscribed on the walls of some of the apartments, was Abu Abd'allah, (*i. e.* the father of Abdallah,) but he is commonly known in Moorish history as Muhamed Abu Alahmar, (or Mahomed, son of Alahmar,) or simply, Abu Alahmar, for the sake of brevity.

He was born in Arjoua, in the year of the Hejera 591, of the Christian era 1195, of the noble family of the Bena Nasar, or children of Nasar, and no expense was spared by his parents to fit him for the high station to which the

opulence and dignity of his family entitled him. The Saracens of Spain were greatly advanced in civilization, every principal city was a seat of learning and the arts, so that it was easy to command the most enlightened instructors for a youth of rank and fortune. Abu Alahmar, when he arrived at manly years, was appointed alcayde or governor of Arjona and Jaen, and gained great popularity by his benignity and justice. Some years afterwards, on the death of Abou Hud, the Moorish power in Spain was broken into factions, and many places declared for Muhamed Abu Alahmar. Being of a sanguine spirit, and lofty ambition, he seized upon the occasion, made a circuit through the country, and was every where received with acclamations. It was in the year 1238, that he entered Granada amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. He was proclaimed king with every demonstration of joy, and soon became the head of the Moslems in Spain,

being the first of the illustrious line of Beni Nasar, that had sat upon the throne. His reign was such as to render him a blessing to his subjects. He gave the command of his various cities to such as had distinguished themselves by valour and prudence, and who seemed most acceptable to the people. He organized a vigilant police, and established rigid rules for the administration of justice. The poor and the distressed always found ready admission to his presence, and he attended personally to their assistance and redress. He erected hospitals for the blind, the aged, and infirm, and all those incapable of labour, and visited them frequently; not on set days with pomp and form, so as to give time for every thing to be put in order, and every abuse concealed, but suddenly and unexpectedly, informing himself, by actual observation and close inquiry, of the treatment of the sick, and the conduct of those appointed to administer to their relief. He

founded schools and colleges, which he visited in the same manner, inspecting personally the instruction of the youth. He established butcheries and public ovens, that the people might be furnished with wholesome provisions at just and regular prices. He introduced abundant streams of water into the city, erecting baths and fountains, and constructing aqueducts and canals to irrigate and fertilize the Vega. By these means prosperity and abundance prevailed in this beautiful city, its gates were thronged with commerce, and its warehouses filled with luxuries and merchandize of every clime and country.

While Muhamed Abu Alahmar was ruling his fair domains thus wisely and prosperously, he was suddenly menaced by the horrors of war. The Christians at that time, profiting by the dismemberment of the Moslem power, were rapidly regaining their ancient territories. James the conqueror had subjected all Valencia,

and Ferdinand the Saint was carrying his victorious arms into Andalusia. The latter invested the city of Jaen, and swore not to raise his camp until he had gained possession of the place. Muhamed Abu Alahmar was conscious of the insufficiency of his means to carry on a war with the potent sovereign of Castile. Taking a sudden resolution, therefore, he repaired privately to the Christian camp, and made his unexpected appearance in the presence of King Ferdinand. "In me," said he, "you behold Muhamed, king of Granada; I confide in your good faith, and put myself under your protection. Take all I possess, and receive me as your vassal." So saying, he knelt and kissed the king's hand in token of submission.

King Ferdinand was touched by this instance of confiding faith, and determined not to be outdone in generosity. He raised his late rival from the earth, and embraced him as a friend, nor would he accept the wealth he offered,

but received him as a vassal, leaving him sovereign of his dominions, on condition of paying a yearly tribute, attending the Cortes as one of the nobles of the empire, and serving him in war with a certain number of horsemen.

It was not long after this that Muhamed was called upon, for his military services, to aid King Ferdinand in his famous siege of Seville. The Moorish king sallied forth with five hundred chosen horsemen of Granada, than whom none in the world knew better how to manage the steed or wield the lance. It was a melancholy and humiliating service, however, for they had to draw the sword against their brethren of the faith.

Muhamed gained a melancholy distinction by his prowess in this renowned conquest, but more true honour by the humanity which he prevailed upon Ferdinand to introduce into the usages of war. When in 1248 the famous city of Seville surrendered to the Castilian monarch,

Muhamed returned sad and full of care to his dominions. He saw the gathering ills that menaced the Moslem cause; and uttered an ejaculation often used by him in moments of anxiety and trouble—"How straightened and wretched would be our life, if our hope were not so spacious and extensive."

"Que angoste y miserable seria nuestra vida, sino fuera tan dilatada y espaciosa nuestra esperanza!"

When the melancholy conqueror approached his beloved Granada, the people thronged forth to see him with impatient joy; for they loved him as a benefactor. They had erected arches of triumph in honour of his martial exploits, and wherever he passed he was hailed with acclamations as *El Ghalib*, or the conqueror. Muhamed shook his head when he heard the appellation. "*Wa la ghalib ila Alá!*" exclaimed he. (There is no conqueror but God!) From that time forward he adopted this exclamation as

a motto. He inscribed it on an oblique band across his escutcheon, and it continued to be the motto of his descendants.

Muhamed had purchased peace by submission to the Christian yoke; but he knew that where the elements were so discordant, and the motives for hostility so deep and ancient, it could not be secure or permanent. Acting therefore upon an old maxim, "Arm thyself in peace, and clothe thyself in summer," he improved the present interval of tranquillity by fortifying his dominions and replenishing his arsenals, and by promoting those useful arts which give wealth and real power to an empire. He gave premiums and privileges to the best artizans; improved the breed of horses and other domestic animals; encouraged husbandry; and increased the natural fertility of the soil two fold by his protection, making the lovely valleys of his kingdom to bloom like gardens. He fostered also the growth and fabrication of silk, until the

looms of Granada surpassed even those of Syria in the fineness and beauty of their productions. He moreover caused the mines of gold and silver and other metals, found in the mountainous regions of his dominions, to be diligently worked, and was the first king of Granada who struck money of gold and silver with his name, taking great care that the coins should be skillfully executed.

It was about this time, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, and just after his return from the siege of Seville, that he commenced the splendid palace of the Alhambra; superintending the building of it in person; mingling frequently among the artists and workmen, and directing their labours.

Though thus magnificent in his works and great in his enterprizes, he was simple in his person and moderate in his enjoyments. His dress was not merely void of splendour, but so plain as not to distinguish him from his subjects.

His harem boasted but few beauties, and these he visited but seldom, though they were entertained with great magnificence. His wives were daughters of the principal nobles, and were treated by him as friends and rational companions. What is more, he managed to make them live as friends with one another. He passed much of his time in his gardens; especially in those of the Alhambra, which he had stored with the rarest plants and the most beautiful and aromatic flowers. Here he delighted himself in reading histories, or in causing them to be read and related to him, and sometimes, in intervals of leisure, employed himself in the instruction of his three sons, for whom he had provided the most learned and virtuous

masters.

As he had frankly and voluntarily offered himself a tributary vassal to Ferdinand, so he always remained loyal to his word, giving him repeated proofs of fidelity and attachment.

When that renowned monarch died in Seville in 1254, Muhamed Abu Alahmar sent ambassadors to condole with his successor Alonzo X., and with them a gallant train of a hundred Moorish cavaliers of distinguished rank, who were to attend, each bearing a lighted taper, round the royal bier, during the funeral ceremonies. This grand testimonial of respect was repeated by the Moslem monarch during the remainder of his life on each anniversary of the death of King Ferdinando el Santo, when the hundred Moorish knights repaired from Granada to Seville, and took their stations with lighted tapers in the centre of the sumptuous cathedral round the cenotaph of the illustrious deceased.

Muhamed Abu Alahmar retained his faculties and vigour to an advanced age. In his seventy-ninth year he took the field on horseback, accompanied by the flower of his chivalry, to resist an invasion of his territories. As the

army sallied forth from Granada, one of the principal adalides, or guides, who rode in the advance, accidentally broke his lance against the arch of the gate. The councillors of the king, alarmed by this circumstance, which was considered an evil omen, entreated him to return. Their supplications were in vain. The king persisted, and at noontide the omen, say the Moorish chroniclers, was fatally fulfilled. Muhamed was suddenly struck with illness, and had nearly fallen from his horse. He was placed on a litter, and borne back towards Granada, but his illness increased to such degree that they were obliged to pitch his tent in the Vega. His physicians were filled with consternation, not knowing what remedy to prescribe. In a few hours he died vomiting blood and in violent convulsions. The Castilian prince Don Philip, brother of Alonzo X., was by his side when he expired. His body was embalmed, enclosed in a silver coffin, and buried in the Alhambra in a

sepulchre of precious marble, amidst the unfeigned lamentations of his subjects, who bewailed him as a parent.

Such was the enlightened patriot prince who founded the Alhambra, whose name remains emblazoned among its most delicate and graceful ornaments, and whose memory is calculated to inspire the loftiest associations in those who tread these fading scenes of his magnificence and glory. Though his undertakings were vast, and his expenditures immense, yet his treasury was always full ; and this seeming contradiction gave rise to the story that he was versed in magic art, and possessed of the secret for transmuting baser metals into gold. Those who have attended to his domestic policy, as here set forth, will easily understand the natural magic and simple alchemy which made his ample treasury to overflow.

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YUSEF ABUL HAGIG,
THE
FINISHER OF THE ALHAMBRA.

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BENEATH the governor's apartment in the Alhambra, is the royal mosque, where the Moorish monarchs performed their private devotions. Though consecrated as a Catholic chapel, it still bears traces of its Moslem origin ; the Saracenic columns with their gilded capitals, and the latticed gallery for the females of the Harem, may yet be seen, and the escutcheons of the Moorish kings are mingled on the walls with those of the Castilian sovereigns.

In this consecrated place perished the illus-

trious Yusef Abul Hagig, the high-minded prince who completed the Alhambra, and who for his virtues and endowments deserves almost equal renown with its magnanimous founder. It is with pleasure I draw forth from the obscurity in which it has too long remained, the name of another of those princes of a departed and almost forgotten race, who reigned in elegance and splendour in Andalusia, when all Europe was in comparative barbarism.

Yusef Abul Hagig, (or, as it is sometimes written, Haxis,) ascended the throne of Granada in the year 1333, and his personal appearance and mental qualities were such, as to win all hearts, and to awaken anticipations of a beneficent and prosperous reign. He was of a noble presence, and great bodily strength, united to manly beauty ; his complexion was exceeding fair, and, according to the Arabian chroniclers, he heightened the gravity and majesty of his appearance by suffering his beard to grow to a

dignified length, and dyeing it black. He had an excellent memory, well stored with science and erudition ; he was of a lively genius, and accounted the best poet of his time, and his manners were gentle, affable, and urbane. Yusef possessed the courage common to all generous spirits, but his genius was more cultivated for peace than war, and though obliged to take up arms repeatedly in his time, he was generally unfortunate. He carried the benignity of his nature into warfare, prohibiting all wanton cruelty, and enjoining mercy and protection towards women and children, the aged and infirm, and all friars and persons of holy and recluse life. Among other ill-starred enterprizes, he undertook a great campaign in conjunction with the king of Morocco, against the kings of Castile and Portugal, but was defeated in the memorable battle of Salado ; a disastrous reverse, which had nearly proved a death-blow to the Moslem power in Spain.

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